

New York Saturday Journal

A HOME WEEKLY

FOR WINTER NIGHTS
AND
SUMMER DAYS.

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No. 275.

LOVE'S FIRST KISS.

BY HAP HAZARD.

When Lida's charms their light discover
To guide the footsteps of her swain,
How blent the portion of her lover
As swift he seeks the goddess' fane!
How filled with bliss his heart doth flutter
When, at her feet on banded knee,
His trembling lips refuse to utter
Its whelming flood of ecstasy!
All gracious she concedes her favor,
And charms his soul with winning smile,
He vows her beauty Venus gave her,
And Giove added every wile!
Now swift his eager arms around her,
All quivering with passion, dart!
Now clinging their clasped hands bound her
Close o'er his palpitating heart!
And now her head, all languid sinking,
Hath found the haven of its rest;
Each tress, a gyve of Cupid's linking,
Enchains the captive in his breast.
A mutual sigh its incense sendeth
Up from the altar of their bliss,
As soul with soul in transport blendeth!
Ah! what were heaven to Love's first kiss!

Tiger Dick:

OR,

THE CASHIER'S CRIME.

A TALE OF MAN'S HATE AND WOMAN'S FAITH.

BY PHILIP S. WARNE.

CHAPTER V.

A QUARREL.

"Sis, have you made an engagement for the picnic?" asked Fred Powell, several days before the event was to take place.
"Yes; with Mr. Beaumont," replied May. Fred frowned impatiently.
"Can't you go anywhere without him?" he asked.

"Why shouldn't I go with Mr. Beaumont?" asked May, looking up in some surprise.
"Oh, I suppose he is as good as anybody. You have only your own taste to please."
"Fred, why do you dislike Mr. Beaumont? Has he ever injured you in any way?"
"I dislike him! No, indeed; he is wholly indifferent to me."

And Fred donned his hat and went out whistling, with his hands in his pockets.
"Fred is unjust to Cecil," said May to herself. "And Cecil is too proud to attempt to propitiate him; but I know that he bears him no ill will. He would not harbor resentment against him a moment—my noble Cecil!"

And she turned to the trifle of fancy work she was doing, with a dreamy look in her blue eyes.

The day came at last, with its sunshine and odor of wild roses. Dead Man's Bluff was a scene of rare festivity. The flutter of gay robes, as some laughing girl shot through the air in the oscillating swing, or ran down some woodland path, darting arch glances over her shoulder at her pursuing lover; the click of mallet against croquet-ball; the snowy cloths laid on the sward, loaded with the contents of the now-empty hampers; the gay hammocks, stretched between the trees, with their occupants as languid and as lovely as any Orient queen; and out on the smoothly-gliding river, the belling sails, and coming over the limpid tide, the sound of lute attuned to a bell-like voice, all combined in a harmony of sights and sounds fit to move an anchorite.

Happiest of all that gay throng was May Powell. With Cecil at her side, she forgot their surroundings, and only felt a delicious thrill of pleasure in listening to the tones of his voice.

Through the shadowy vistas they passed, arm in arm, over the velvet turf and beneath the great oaks that stretched their giant arms above them, as if in benediction.

Through a break in the foliage, Cecil caught sight of a boat passing near.
"Hallo! Corville," he called to the rower; "aren't you going to give us a chance?"
"Certainly. Come down to the landing," was the cheerful reply, and the boat's head was turned toward the flag-decked pier.

"Hallo, Corville; just in time," said Fred Powell, as the boat ran alongside the landing, and the young man leaped out. "Come, Miss Flo, jump in, and we'll catch those runaways before they get half across the pond."

"I beg your pardon, Mr. Powell," said Cecil, now appearing on the scene; "but I believe that Mr. Corville yields the boat to Miss Powell and myself."

Fred turned toward Cecil and looked at him from head to foot, with a contemptuous flash in his eyes; then drawing the boat close up to the wharf, said:

"First come, first served. That would seem to be fair. Come, Miss Goldthorp, we are losing time."

It was evident that he had been drinking more wine than was good for him. He had reached that point where the discipline and breeding of the gentleman are lost in the stubborn self-will of the man. He had had a race to the landing with a previous party, who had forestalled him in getting a boat. He would not now be thwarted again, and by a man whom he so cordially disliked. So, throwing aside all questions of right and courtesy, he extended his hand to help Florence into the skiff.

Mr. Corville now interposed.
"Perhaps I ought to say that Mr. Beaumont spoke to me and engaged the boat. It was to give it up to him that I brought it in."



"Just handle them little silver knobs, Mr. Cashier—lively."

"Mr. Corville, are you through with the boat?" asked Fred, turning upon him.
"Certainly."

"Well, that seems to end the matter. You brought it in, and I was the first to take it. We acknowledge no privileged class here. Miss Goldthorp, will you allow me to assist you in?"
"Perhaps we had better yield—" began Florence.

"Do you refuse to go?" demanded her escort, hotly.
"Mr. Powell," said Cecil, "it seems to me that the right of this matter is quite apparent to any one who is willing to consider it fairly. Mr. Corville had possession of the boat, and at my request brought it in, out of compliment to Miss Powell. Of course your being in waiting for a boat could not affect Mr. Corville's right to transfer the one in his possession to any one he pleased."

"I do not care to discuss the matter with you, Mr. Beaumont. I have the boat by right of precedence; and that is enough for me."
"I am afraid I shall have to maintain the rights of the lady to whom the boat was yielded," said Cecil, with quiet determination; but there was a slumbrous fire in his eye, as he laid his hand on the painter.

"Take your hand off from there, or I'll knock you into the water!" fulminated Fred, bursting with rage.
A crimson wave of anger surged up into Cecil's face and then receded, leaving it pale and with deeply-marked lines about the mouth. There was a steely glitter in his eye, and a rigid tension of all the muscles of his frame, that would have marked him as a dangerous man to one less observing than Fred Powell; but the latter, too, was an athlete in build and training, and feared no man.

May Powell had been standing with flashing eyes and an indignant flush in her cheeks. She now stepped between the combatants and addressed her brother.
"Fred, Powell," she said, "you are ungentlemanly. This is an outrage. Even if we had not the indisputable right to the skiff, you have conducted yourself from the first like a boor. Apologize to Mr. Beaumont, instantly!"

There was something of the ludicrous in the commanding tone which this little woman took with her brother, and some of the auditors smiled. It nettled Fred more than ever.

"Sis," he cried, "will you please to keep your own out of these troubled waters! Of course I will comply with your very reasonable demand, at some future day, when I have nothing better on hand."

She turned her back on him.
"Mr. Beaumont," she said, "you, at least, have the gentlemanly courtesy to terminate this shameful scene, even at the sacrifice of our rights?"

"Miss Powell," he replied, calmly, though his whole frame was a-quiver with suppressed emotion, "I hold myself subject to your commands. Will you accept my arm?"

She took it with a grateful look that would have rewarded him for everything, had he truly loved her; but he saw Florence Goldthorp draw aside her skirts and stand coldly to let them pass, and in his heart that look awoke the fires of hell.

Carrying his point brought no satisfaction to Fred Powell. He felt that he had lowered himself in the estimation of all about him; while in yielding the field, Cecil had gained the victory. Even to Florence, when she had time for reflection, he must appear at a disadvantage.

"Beaumont, have our boat," called out a cheerful voice.
A skiff grazed the pier; Charley Brewster leaped out, assisted his lady from the boat, and turning to May Powell, with a bow, said:
"Miss Powell, will you oblige me by taking our place?"

May rewarded him with a smile that sent a glow to his heart, such as it had never experienced before—a smile that lived in his memory for many a week after.

Cecil saw his opportunity, and, thanking Brewster, assisted May into the stern-sheets, leaped aboard and pushed off, outwardly as undisturbed as if nothing unusual had happened.

A momentary hesitation on the part of Florence, about accepting what was obviously yielded from considerations of expediency, not conceded as a right, caused a delay which Cecil made haste to improve, by being the first to embark. Fred saw the smile of gratification on the faces of those who had espoused Cecil's side, and ground his teeth in rage, more bitter than ever against his opponent. He helped Florence in; and then his choleric found vent in the play of his muscles, as he sent the light skiff spinning through the water.

As for Cecil, beneath his unruffled exterior a tornado of passion was raging. He was a man who never forgave an insult; and now was added the sting of coldness from the woman he loved. She had gone over to Fred's side, right or wrong, and with her eyes on the ground in cold contempt, drew aside her skirts to let Cecil pass.

In vain did May strive to be cheerful. Though he laughed and chatted with apparent ease, her woman's instinct told her that his thoughts were not upon her, nor on the conversation in hand.

A feeling of depression gradually stole over her; and when in the evening he was about to leave her at home, she threw herself upon his breast, in a sudden flood of tears.

"Why, May, what is the matter?" he asked, supporting her in his arms.

"Oh, Cecil," she cried, in the quivering voice of a grief-stricken child, "do you love me—really and truly? I sometimes feel that you do, and then—oh, I am so happy! But there will creep in such a chilling doubt, it seems as if my heart would freeze. I can't help it. I could die with wretchedness. Oh, tell me that you love me!"

"May! May!" he expostulated, soothing her with his hand. "You are not yourself. How can you doubt me! Have you not had an evidence of my love this very day? I never before in my life passed over an insult without resentment; but I remembered that he was your brother."

"Cecil, did you do it for my sake?" she cried, her face irradiated with ineffable happiness. And with her arms about his neck and her soft cheek against his, she went on: "Oh, my darling! you do love me—you do love me!"

Cecil Beaumont was not wholly bad; and as he felt this gentle creature nestle closer and closer in his arms, trembling in every limb with excess of happiness, and thought of the great wrong he was doing her, the hideousness of his duplicity arose before him, and something akin to remorse crept into his heart. If he could only get away from all the evil that surrounded him, and go with her to some uninhabited corner of the earth, he felt that he could reward her love with something like a return.

But then there appeared before him a scorn-

ful face, averted look, and garments drawn disdainfully aside; and with a great leap of his heart, he set his teeth hard and returned to his purpose, all the more relentlessly because of this one moment of softening.

"Curse him! curse him!" he hissed, between his clenched teeth, when he was alone in the darkness of the street, "I'll sink him to the veriest depths, and then I'll have his blood—ay, his blood! Money!—what is money in the balance with a tortured heart? No! henceforth I live for revenge. If I ever had a scruple, on his account, this night I bury it. His arrogance has sealed his doom; his folly shall supply the means of its accomplishment."

CHAPTER VI.

THE EVE OF A CRISIS.

WITH the gathering shades of night, ghoul-like clouds had begun to chase each other across the sky, and fitful gusts of wind, with the chill of the grave in them, scudded along the streets and sighed dismally among the tree-tops, while about the horizon hovered ominous lightning, like the impotent menace of chained demons. Amid such a scene stood Cecil Beaumont, and bowing in his hands a face clammy with anguish-wrung sweat, moaned:

"Oh, Florence! Florence! I could die for you, yet I shall blast your life, by destroying him in whom your heart is bound up! Do you love him as I love you? If you do, then God help you!"

In the streets, with fellow-creatures thronging on every side, yet as much alone as if he were in a desert, Cecil Beaumont sought relief from the anguish that was consuming him.

While he was walking rapidly, a paper was thrust into his hand. He turned suddenly, but no one seemed near enough to have reached him. A second time Shadow Jim had baffled him, and now stood within four feet of him, unsuspected.

At a gaslight in a deserted street he read the missive. It ran:

"Everything is in readiness. Be at your post."

With a quick-throbbing heart, Cecil walked rapidly to the bank. Now the die was to be cast. What would turn uppermost? Who could tell? Success, freedom, revenge, on one side; failure, infamy, a prison, and perhaps the gallows, on the other!

Cecil found Dawson, the janitor, already at the bank; for it was after ten o'clock. He had made his bed as usual by turning back the lounge, but sat reading the newspaper before retiring.

"Don't let me keep you up, when you get ready to go to bed, Dawson," said the cashier. "I've been on a lark, and those that dance must pay the fiddler, you know. It will be midnight before I can think of sleep."

He was soon busily engaged at his desk; and presently the old man retired, and his heavy snoring indicated the tranquillity of his slumber.

Cecil worked away with a will. In the morning he must have something to show for his two hours' work. When the clock struck twelve, he purposely closed with a slam the ledger in which he was writing. The sound awoke Dawson, as he intended it should, and he sat upright and rubbed his eyes.

"You're at work late, Mr. Beaumont," said the janitor, with a glance at the clock.

"Yes; but I am just through; I guess I won't go home to-night, but stay at the bank. By the way, won't you have a little wine with

me? I'm feeling fagged out, and it won't do you any harm either, at your age."

"Thankee, Mr. Beaumont," replied the janitor, his mouth beginning to water; for it was not the first time he had had a sip of wine with the cashier on similar occasions, and he knew that a rare treat awaited him. "As a man grows old, he do need a little something now and then to strengthen him."

Cecil passed into the next room, and soon reappeared with decanter and glasses. He filled a glass for himself, and then pushed the decanter across the desk to Dawson.

They chatted a while over their wine; and then Cecil passed into his own room, the janitor returned to his bed, and only his snoring broke the stillness.

Meanwhile, Fred Powell was again in the clutches of Billy Saunderson, the "decoy duck." Having already drunk too much wine at the picnic, he fell an easy prey to the designs of his pretended friend. Charley Brewster expostulated in vain.

"Come, Fred," he said, "it's only the part of a friend to tell you that you have drank too much. You ought to go home. You know that I warned you the last time."

"Look-a-here, Mammy Brewster, take me under wing, too, do," sneered Billy Saunderson. "Now, unlike Fred here, I know I've been a naughty boy, and ought to be tucked in my little trundle-bed. Don't throw away your solicitude on this thankless beggar; but rake me to your maternal bosom."

Charley turned from him with an angry flush, but held his temper.

"Fred, will you come?" he asked. "You know it will be better for you."

"Confound it, Brewster," said Fred, who had not forgotten that it was Charley who offered Cecil his boat, "I supposed that it was generally accounted commendable in a man to be able to give due attention to his own affairs, without meddling with those of other people. I'm very grateful, and all that sort of thing, for your watchful care; but I confess myself at a loss to imagine who appointed you as my guardian and protector."

Snubbed a second time, Charley Brewster turned on his heel and walked off, without another word.

"Let the fool go!" he muttered, angrily. "I doubt whether I'm not the bigger fool for trying to reason with him."

Then he thought of May; and a pang of sympathy shot through his heart at the suffering she must endure over her brother's ruin.

"Disposed of once more," muttered Billy Saunderson, with a gleam of satisfaction, as Brewster turned away. "Now to business!"

He had no difficulty in still further plying Fred with liquor. But by half-past nine a feeling of remorse and shame came over Fred, and he determined to put an end to the dissipation of the evening.

"Fugh! Fred, you're not going?" said Billy, when he announced his purpose.

"Yes, I've had enough for to-night."

"But it ain't ten o'clock yet! Nonsense, man! we're in for a night of it. The Fourth of July don't come but once a year. Step up and take something."

"No more for me, if you please. You may stay as long as you like; but I am going to make a change of base."

"Oh, pshaw! Fred, this is stopping right in the middle."

But having declared his determination, Fred was not to be dissuaded, and began to walk toward the door. Billy accompanied him, and together they emerged on the street.

As they passed out the door they were jostled by others entering; and in that moment Billy's hand glided into Fred's pocket, and came out again, with a bunch of keys held between the fore and middle fingers. The keys were transferred to the "tail pocket" of his own coat, and then Billy tied a knot of ribbon in his buttonhole, and walked as far as the corner with Fred. There he took leave of him, and returned to the hotel and went up to his room.

"I wonder if they are as sharp as they think they are?" he muttered, as he struck a light.

He suspected that in order to get possession of the keys, without his (Billy's) being able to swear that he had given them to him, Tiger Dick had employed a cunning thief to pick his pocket. But with this suspicion in his mind, he had watched every one that had come near him, in his walk to the corner and back; yet he had felt no hand in his pocket.

He now thrust his own hand in, expecting to draw forth the keys. What was his surprise to find, instead, a small round packet, wrapped in the foil from a package of tobacco! Upon being opened, it proved to contain ten ten-dollar bills.

"By the jumping geewhille! if that ain't the cutest dodge that was ever played on this sport!" he exclaimed, hardly able to credit his senses.

The truth was that he had not been robbed on the street, but after he returned to the hotel, and while he was passing through the crowded office, feeling secure from any attempt at thievery, Shadow Jim was by no means a bungler.

"Hurrah!" cried Billy, patting the money affectionately. "This will get me out of one of the confoundedest scrapes that I ever got into. Hurrah! I'm on my feet again. Now, lay on, Macduff! Jump right up on my muscle! I'm ready for the whole kit and caboodle!"

In the exuberance of his joy, Billy resolved to make a night of it; and, secreting the money, returned to the saloon, after an ab-

sence of not more than fifteen minutes, where he again met Charley Brewster.

Meanwhile, the knob of Tiger Dick's door turned, and without any previous warning, Shadow Jim stood in his presence.

"Your keys, boss," he said, laconically, tossing Fred Powell's keys on the table.

"Good! You were successful! Jim, you're a trump!"

He drew pen and paper before him, wrote a line, and said:

"That to Cecil Beaumont, without delay."

Shadow Jim took the paper, and without a word, left the room.

"Ha-ha! my fine bird," cried Tiger Dick, exultantly, rattling the keys. "These are the little jokers that answer half a dozen ends. First, they give us ready access to the treasure-house. Second, by seeming to implicate you, they stifle investigation. Third, they prove an 'open sesame,' should any of us run our head into a sling. Fourth, they set you and your precious grandpa by the ears, which may prove a hundred thousand or so in the pockets of Tiger Dick, my Lord Duke & Co. Fifth, they deprive you of the black-eyed peri, who was never destined for such a loggerhead as you, and of whom more anon. Sixth, and best of all, by sinking you in infamy, they revenge the insult offered me in her presence!"

And at this last Tiger Dick ground his teeth and fetched his hand down on the table, with a force that showed how bitterly the indignity put upon him yet rankled in his breast.

And all this time, Fred Powell, afraid to go home, lest this second lapse into intemperance should be detected, was sleeping off the effects of his dissipation in a boat-house on the river, all unconscious of the storm that loomed darkly above him, just about to burst.

CHAPTER VII.

THE BANK ROBBERY.

As Cecil Beaumont lay listening to the heavy breathing of Dawson, the janitor, a tumult of thoughts crowded his brain. 'This was the turning-point in the drama of wickedness in which he had involved himself. A few hours would prove the perfectness of all his plots.

In that moment he knew no relenting. He had cast his lot, and henceforward nothing could swerve him from the steady prosecution of his purpose.

"I am too deep in the mire to think now of retreat, even if I desired it, which I do not," he said. "All the high ground lies in advance. I must go forward. With twenty-five or thirty thousand dollars in my pocket, and Fred impassably separated from Florence, I can throw overboard May and her fortune, and try to win my heart's core—the apple of my eye! Oh! poverty and heaven with her! the wealth of the Orient and the tortures of hell without her! My life! my darling! I cannot—I will not give you up!"

The clock struck one. It broke in upon his meditations like a note of doom.

His bedroom door stood ajar, and he could hear the *click!-click!*—as the pendulum swung back and forth.

With bated breath, lips apart, and a clammy moisture on his brow, he fell to counting the seconds.

Thus the time wore on until the clock struck two. The tinkling sound died away in the silent room, and nothing was heard but the swaying of the pendulum and the heavy breathing of the sleeper. The suspense was becoming unendurable. Cecil Beaumont lay upon his bed, trembling from head to foot and with the perspiration starting from every pore.

Presently he heard a sound, different from those he had been listening to. His heart gave a bound, and then stood still. He listened again. It was the gradual insertion of a key into a lock. It glided by the wards with a sound only perceptible to his strained senses. Then a door turned noiselessly on its hinges. A chilly breath of air reached him in his room. Muffled footsteps passed the threshold. The door was closed, and all was silent as the grave—all save the *click!-click!*—of the swaying pendulum and the heavy breathing of the sleeping janitor.

Cecil Beaumont could hear the blood course through the arteries of his neck, as it surged up into his brain, with a concussion like the fall of a heavy hammer.

Then long shadows fell through the crevice of the door, and traced their course across the walls of his darkened chamber—one!—two!—three! Then an interval of quiet, in which the pendulum seemed to cry out in warning—*awake!-awake!*—and the gurgling sound in the throat of the old sleeper sounded like the death-rattle.

Cecil Beaumont raised upon his elbow, with eyes fixed upon the crevice of the door, through which the light streamed faintly. He hushed his breath. It seemed as if the throbbing of his heart must be heard in the outer room.

Through the awful stillness came a sharp sound—not the click of the pendulum. Upon Cecil's sharpened senses it burst like the crack of a rifle, but he knew it was the set of the hammer of a pistol.

Then came a sound of awakening from the sleeper. The gurgle in his throat increased to a sound of strangulation that made Cecil shudder and his blood run cold. But the sleeper rallied, coughed, turned on his couch, and aroused himself with a stifled exclamation.

Next came a voice in a hoarse whisper:

"Silence, on your life!"

The old man lay still and said, in a subdued voice, somewhat shaken by apprehension:

"Gentlemen, what do you want with me?"

"Bind him!" came the whispered command. And then to the old man: "One motion of resistance, one sound to attract assistance, and your life pays the penalty!"

There was a slight creaking of the sofa-bedstead, as if the old man were turned on his face; then a coil of rope fell with a muffled sound to the floor.

"Now listen. And remember your life isn't worth a toss, if you try to spring any little game on us."

"You need not hold that pistol to my head; I will answer you."

"We will keep it there as a reminder. Is the key to the vault kept anywhere in the bank-office?"

"No, sir; not to my knowledge."

"Anybody else?"

"Mr. Powell has one, sir."

"Where is he?"

"The cashier, Mr. Beaumont."

"Where is he?"

"He lives—"

"Hist!" came a sudden warning. "What was that?"

"It sounded like some one breathing heavily, or snoring," said a strange voice.

"Harkee, old man," said he who appeared to be the principal, "does any one else sleep in this here shebang? Now keep a straight tongue!"

"Take it away, sir! I'll answer you. The cashier is sleeping in the next room."

"Hi! men, gag this fellow. We've got all we want out of his clam-shell. Hold the little bulldog to his knowledge-box, Jimmy, while we escort in this dainty cashier. Gads! we're in luck!"

There were sounds as if his orders were being carried out, and then stealthy footsteps approached the door of the bedroom.

Despite his association in the plot, the acting was so real that Cecil felt his heart leap into his throat, as the door swung open, admitting a flood of light and three men in masks. The leader held a cocked pistol in his hand; the second carried a coil of rope, and the third a gag.

Cecil lay as if asleep, until the masked intruder placed a heavy hand on his shoulder. Then he started up with a suppressed cry, in which all was not feigned, to such a high had his feelings been wrought by this diabolical act.

"Not a sound, or you are a dead man!" commanded his assailant, with the pistol at his head.

"I see that I am in your power, and know the folly of offering resistance. Take away your weapon," said Cecil, in a voice whose tremulousness was unassumed.

"You have very sensible views," replied the masked ruffian; "but, if you please, we will put it of your power to resist. Bind his left arm securely, men. And, as we have no use for his tongue, put a stopper on it. You see, if I do all the talking, you will have so much better opportunity to act."

His orders being executed, he went on:

"Now, sir, we'll give you a chance to get into your pantaloons, if you are particular on that score. But none of your tricks, or I'll let daylight through you in the drop of an eyelash!"

Cecil availed himself of the privilege, and was then led into the counting-room. He found Dawson lying on his couch, bound and gagged like himself. The janitor looked the sympathy he could not speak.

The leader now drew a bowie-knife from his belt, and holding it so that the point just touched the back of Cecil's neck, said:

"Now, Mr. Cashier, the firm, which I have the honor to represent, has concluded to withdraw its deposits from this bank. Just open that door, if you please."

As there was no help for it, Cecil produced the key, inserted it into the slit of the lock, gave it a half-turn, and one of the burglars shot back the bolts, and swung the door open.

"That's as easy as rolling off a log," laughed the leader. "If we always had so obliging a janitor, we could dispense altogether with them tools."

Turning to one of his companions, he said: "Just keep an eye on that snoozer, Jimmy, while we take a peep into the sanctum sanctorum."

At this point, the call of a night-bird sounded clear on the air.

With a swift motion, the leader thrust Cecil into the vault.

"Pile in there!" cried the chief to his subordinates, and run a knife into that cashier, if he utters a chirp."

As they leaped in and grasped Cecil one on either side, the chief shut the vault door, and then turned to the terrified janitor.

"Move an eyewinker, and you are a dead man!" he said, sternly.

He drew a coverlet over the prostrate man, and then secreted himself under the counter, keeping the janitor covered with his pistol.

Dawson supposed that the burglars had received warning that they were in danger of detection; but, far from calling for help, he lay scarcely daring to breathe. He had seen the two knives held in terrifying proximity to Cecil's heart, and now saw the flashing barrel that kept its frowning muzzle pointed toward himself.

The lower blinds being closed, the burglars would have been invisible to any one passing in the street; but they had secreted themselves in order that suspicion might not be awakened by any chance shadow thrown upon the walls.

After the lapse of about ten minutes a different cry was heard, and the burglar emerged fearlessly from beneath the counter.

"Whew!" exclaimed one of the ruffians, drawing a long breath, when they were released from the vault. "Don't ever shove this chicken into such an oven as that again. I began to think the old boy had got my carcass, sure."

"You'll be in a hotter place than that some of these fine days," laughed the chief. "But now for business. Just handle them little silver knobs, Mr. Cashier—lively!"

With a knife held playfully at his throat, Cecil went through the combination, and the burglars threw open the safe. With exclamations of satisfaction they rummaged the safe, appropriating all the paper money and the small supply of coin it contained.

Cecil was then bound securely, and thrown upon the bed beside the janitor; and taking up their bag of cracksmen's tools, for which there had been no use, the burglars withdrew.

"Keep up heart, my trussed bantams," said the chief, playfully. "In the morning you may tell your people that you have had visitors during the night."

Then he went out, closing the door after him, and turning a key.

The janitor stretched his neck around to look his perplexity at Cecil. Where did the burglars get a key?—Dawson would have asked, had he had the use of his tongue. Cecil only returned his blank gaze.

The scene in the bank had a sequel which had not been counted on. The perpetrators of the robbery had proceeded several blocks undisturbed, when, suddenly, they heard the measured footfall of a policeman ahead of them.

"Hunt your holes!" commanded the leader; and the whole crew dashed into an alleyway. "This won't do," he went on. "We must scatter or the cops will bag the whole lot of us."

Acting upon his suggestion, two of the ruffians took one direction, and he and the fourth took another, intending to further separate as soon as opportunity offered.

As they were proceeding through to the other street, a dog suddenly leaped out upon them, raising an uproar with his barking. The burglars started forward on a run, anxious to get clear of a vicinity where detection was so imminent.

As they emerged from the alley, the one in advance rushed headlong into the arms of a policeman, who was coming to investigate the cause of the noise, and both went to the ground.

"Stick a knife into him, Jimmy," cried the captured burglar.

But the policeman was strong and active, and kept up such a lively motion that the ruffian was at a loss where to strike, so as not to injure his pal. All the while he was calling loudly for assistance.

Soon there was a rush of feet and a whirl of rattles, and, seeing himself in danger of ap-

prehension, Jimmy abandoned his luckless chief and plunged into the alley. Here he was again attacked by the dog; but as the act could not now further jeopard his safety, and as the brute, if left, might be employed by the police to track him, he shot him, and sped on through the darkness.

Emerging on another street, he ran up a stairway, fearing to appear in the street, where he might meet an officer at any turn. Up to the fourth story and out upon the roof, carefully replacing the scuttle; from roof to roof and down through another building into a cross street he passed, and gliding from doorway to doorway like a shadow, eluded his pursuers.

Meanwhile, the plucky policeman clung to his captive until assistance came. Then he was secured and his wrists ornamented with the steel bracelets. His mask had been torn off in the struggle; and a bull's-eye turned upon him revealed the smiling countenance of Tiger Dick.

"Well, gents," he said, coolly, "you've got me; I don't ask to be handled like a baby; but I ain't the devil, either; so a reasonable amount of tying up and holding on to will keep me from running away. If you know of any nice boarding-place in a quiet neighborhood, suppose we seek it and get in out of the night-air."

The policemen knew the Tiger, and laughed at his sally. One of them said:

"Ain't this a little out of your line, Richard?"

"Ain't what out of my line?"

"Why, this masquerading, you know, at such unseasonable hours," replied the officer, with a grin.

"What's to prevent a citizen of this here Commonwealth from taking an airing when ever he pleases? And if he has a mind to protect his phiz from these raw winds, who's to hinder, I'd like to know?"

The Tiger pushed his tongue into his cheek, canted his head on one side, and favored his auditors with a decided wink.

His playfulness put them in a good humor. Even his first captor laughed as he rubbed his head where it had sustained too intimate relations with the pavement.

"I say, Bewick," said Tiger Dick, addressing one of the policemen, as they walked along, "if, when you are off duty in the morning, you will take the trouble to tell Jimmy Duff the number of my room and ask him to drop around, the first thing, he'll pay you the five dollars that I'll owe you, I wouldn't ask him to call upon me, only I feel as if I'd keep the house for a few days."

Bewick laughingly promised compliance, and one of the other officers said:

"Speaking of Jimmies, wasn't that 'The Shady' that gave us the slip?"

He called him Jimmy, and requested him to tuck his knife under my ribs," said the policeman who had effected the capture.

"All's fair in love and war," laughed the Tiger. "Not that I loved you less, but that I hated your company more."

"Laven, McCabe and Doolan, suppose you go and lay for Shadow Jim," said the officer who appeared to be in command.

"You may lay as much as you please; but if you hatch out that chick, just let me know," said the Tiger, with a chuckle.

(To be continued—commenced in No. 271.)

RED ROB.

The Boy Road-Agent.

BY OLL COOMES.

AUTHOR OF "DAKOTA DAN," "BOWIE-KNIFE BEN," "OLD HURRICANE," "HAWKEYE HARRY," ETC., ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE IMPRISONED MAID.

We left Asa Sheridan and his betrothed, the lovely Zella, face to face with Leopold Hamallado in the mountain grotto.

The look that mourned the face of the dark-visaged Spaniard was one of consuming rage and fiendish triumph mingled. His lips curled with all the scorn and indignation of his wicked soul, and his dark eyes snapped and glowed as if with living fire.

Asa Sheridan saw the uncompromising fury of the man's heart, and he arose to his feet determined to defend himself and Zella to the last; but before he had shown his intention by any hostile movement, a dozen of Hamallado's men appeared at the entrance to the grotto.

Resistance now, on the part of Sheridan, would be sheer madness.

"Ha! by the Holy Virgin!" exclaimed Hamallado, with savage fury and triumph, "we have found the villain and his gentle friend!"

"Oh, father!" cried Zella, imploringly, springing forward and throwing herself at the villain's feet, "spare him, father, I implore you!"

The wretch seized her rudely and thrust her aside with a horrible oath.

"I will spare him, the young dog!" hissed the villain. "I will spare him only for the tiger-pit; and you, girl, will suffer for this under the bastinado. A cozy nest to woo your mate in, my gentle child. But I will see to your happiness hereafter. And you, dog of a miner and scapegrace—you will not escape my vengeance again. Here, men! seize and bind the young villain—cut his throat if he offers the least resistance."

The young man saw how useless—even dangerous, it was to offer resistance; so he had to quietly submit to the power of the outlaws, and was securely bound.

Hamallado searched the grotto. He found the book in which was that letter of fiendish triumph and gloating revenge. This added new fuel to his consuming wrath, and Zella's poor heart almost ceased to beat through fear that he would murder herself or lover in cold blood to appease that terrible fire in his breast.

Asa was conducted down the mountain side, across a little chaparral, beyond which lay acres of those ancient ruins that are strewn through the San Juan valley. He was taken to and inside an old quadrangular building—the only one amid the ruins that held out any inducement as a habitation. And even this from the exterior looked like a huge pile of stone and sun-dried brick, overgrown with rank weeds and parasitical vines.

The captive was led along a dismal passage, down a flight of moldy, slippery stairs, and into the very dungeon from which Slyly, the Weasel, had liberated him a week previous. Here he was bound hand and foot and chained to the cold, slimy floor. A guard was then placed at the door, and all possibilities of escape cut off.

Sad and serious thoughts now crowded upon the young man's brain. He had brought all this suffering upon himself. Why had he not made his escape from the surrounding dangers when he was free to go? Why had he remained inactive in the mountain grotto, when night after night offered its friendly shelter under

which to depart in safety? Ah! why, indeed? His own heart answered: he was a captive even in the mountain grotto. Love held him there enchained, and what danger would a true man not brave for the woman that he loves?

One thought brought others in its train, until finally the night of his first captivity, with all its horrors, was recalled to memory. And then the face of that noble old man, the mysterious Basil Walraymond, stood before his mental vision. He recalled all that Zella had told him of the "tiger-pit," of the crushed and broken arm of the old man, and his escape into the forest. But, where was he now? Had he perished in the woods for want of some friendly aid? Was he a wandering sufferer among the mountain hills, dying slowly by inches?

While these thoughts were revolving through his mind, Zella, his betrothed, was weeping sad and lonely in all the agony of a broken heart, in a room on the floor above where she had been imprisoned by the wretch whom she had always loved as a father.

Leopold Hamallado was seated before her, mocking her in her helplessness.

"You have brought this all upon yourself, girl," he said, with a savage fierceness in his tone, "and now you'll have to suffer the extreme penalty. You managed that miner's escape, you hid him away among the hills, fed and wooed him there, at the same time denying all knowledge of his whereabouts. Then to cap the climax, you carried him the book and letter—"

"In which you exposed your fiendish character!" cried Zella, in a fierce, reproachful tone.

"I have proven myself an enemy that seeks a terrible revenge, girl. I loved your mother and warned your father that if he won her away from me, he would rue it. And so he has. He shall know yet that I have his child, and that I propose to make her my wife. You are the very picture of your mother. She was an educated woman, and that you might be as near like her in every respect, as was possible, I sent you to school and into the best society at Albuquerque. Your father is still living, and I will tell you something about him before long that will astonish you. But in one week from to-day we leave Quivira ruins for Salt Lake City, and between now and then—or as soon as the men all get home—your handsome, vagabond lover will be consigned to death in the tiger-pit."

Zella stirred not, nor even evinced the slightest emotion at the man's fiendish words and threats. But nothing escaped her ears. Every word was indelibly stamped on her memory.

Presently the villain arose and left the room, locking the door behind him.

Then the resolute courage that she had been struggling to keep up so long, gave way, and the maiden burst into a flood of tears. The deepest anguish wrung her poor young heart.

She was kept a close prisoner, her wants being attended by the old negress that was both cook and housekeeper in the outlaws' retreat.

From the negress she learned that active preparations for departure from the ruins were going on. She said the captain was getting uneasy—that he had expressed a fear of that old man who had escaped from the tiger-pit.

"Where is Slyly, Huldah?" Zella asked the negress one morning, when she brought in her breakfast.

"He's skulkin' round de ruins here like a kill-shit fiste-dog. Guess he's up to some deviltry. De ole massa jist mo'n licked thunder outen him yiesderday, and he look mos' awful meakin', does dat Slyly boy."

This news, bad as it was, in one respect, gave Zella some hope. She felt satisfied that her faithful servant-boy would leave nothing undone to liberate her.

On the fourth night of her incarceration she suddenly became aware that something or some one was in her room. She was so terrified that she could not move nor utter a word. It was so dark in the room that she could not see her hand before her. An awful horror stilled her heart; and at last, when it seemed as though the awful suspense could be borne no longer, a voice whispered:

"Missus Zel-lee!" the last syllable slipped out into a shrill, wheezy squeak.

It was Slyly, the Weasel.

The sudden reaction from terror to joy left Zella so weak that she could scarcely stand.

"Is it you, Slyly?" she gasped, as if in doubt.

"You jist bet, Missus Zella. Guess if I wasn't so black like de darkness, you could see me."

"Where did you get in, Slyly?"

"Jings! I jis' wiggle-waggled in; but sorry to say you can't git out dar, Missus. But I come in to see you, and see if I could do enny-thing for you."

"What's going on, outside, Slyly?"

"Oh, Lord, Missus! ebb'rything dat's bad. De ole massa givin' me de awfulestest whalin' dat I ever had. Whew-ee! he jis' made de blood fly! I'd kill him dead, Missus," and the boy's voice fell to a calm, deliberat tone, "if you'd tell me to."

"Oh, no, Slyly! never! You would be a murderer then—the wickedest of wicked people. But, what is your master and the men doing?"

"Fixing up de tiger-pit to put de young man, Massa Shear-a-ding into. De men cotch two mos' gol-whoppin' big bears in de bear-traps and dey am gwine to make dem eat de prisoner up, 'fore de Lord dey is, Missus Zella."

"Slyly, you have been a good, kind boy to me," said Zella, laying her hands upon the youth's head. "If I ever can, I will make you a present of a pony or a gun some day; or, whatever else you would prefer."

"Golly, Missus! guess I'll take a big, long plug ob tobakker."

Zella could not help smiling at the boy's aspiration, but, having promised him the coveted article, she said:

"Slyly, can't you turn the bears out and let them get away?"

"Guess not, Missus; 'fraid dey'll cotch dis nigger. But I knows sumthin' better'n dat, I does. I know how mean ole massa kill de wolves dat howl in de valley. He put pising in de meat and give it to dem. I knows what de pising is, and I gness I give some to de bears."

"Do so, Slyly, and you will never regret it," replied Zella, highly pleased with the youth's idea. "But be very careful that you are not caught in the act, or it will cost you your life."

"Think I will be dogged-gosh careful, Missus."

The boy soon left the room, his exit being made with that wonderful silence with which he had entered.

The next morning Zella looked for the place where he had effected his entry, but could see no sign of an opening in the walls, the ceiling or the floor.

The coming night was the time set for the execution, or rather the torture, of Asa Sheridan; and, as the day wore away, a vague and horrible suspense took possession of Zella's mind, which was increased by a dull, foreboding sound without, resembling the moan of a coming storm.

Shortly after darkness set in, Slyly stood at her side in her prison-room.

"Did you succeed in killing the bears, Slyly?" the maiden asked, trembling through fear of a negative answer.

"Lord, yes, Missus; de bears am as dead as Noah!" the youth replied.

Zella's brain grew dizzy with the sudden rush of blood from her heart that had seemed to be growing cold with fear and horror; but she soon recovered her usual composure, and asked:

"Does your master know it?"

"Guess he does, Missus; and, Lord, gosh! it 'd do yohs soul good to hear him chaw out de awfulest cuss words. Gracious, Peter! but he's jist a foam'n' mad! I tell you it's fun to hear him cuss and rave. He's a mighty easy swearing man—words flow like as easy as de San Ju-ann."

"Does he mistrust who poisoned them?"

"No, guess not, for I heard him say he'd exterminate the one that done it if he knewed who it war."

"Do you know what they're going to do with the captive?"

"A birth-mark?—a strawberry on his arm?" laughed Octavia.

"No, child; but he had a finger cut off, and a big scar on his head, and one of his big toes was crooked; and I'd know him by these firmities."

"I should think so; but look here, aunty, the time for you to tell that secret about my life is up; do you know it?"

"Oh, bless my soul, Octavia! I war in hopes you'd forgot dat sekret. It'll cause you trouble, child, and if I hadn't promised ole Massa St. Kenelm to tell you and Massa Albert, I'd die afore I'd tell it—yes, indeed I would, honey; but if I must, why, I must."

"You must tell it, aunty," said Octavia, seating herself by the old negress's side.

"Well, child, to come right slap-dab to de pint, you's not your fadder's child."

"Not my father's child?" exclaimed Octavia, in astonishment; "what do you mean by that assertion?"

"I mean you's not Massa St. Kenelm's child—not Massa Albert's sister."

"Is this true, Aunt Shady?" demanded the maiden, in painful surprise.

"Yes, honey, bright, honey; you's not Massa Albert's sister."

"Then who am I?"

"Don't know who, child."

"My God!" cried the maiden, bitterly, "am I an outcast? Was I picked out of the gutter?"

"No, indeedy, you wa't. You war a sweet, darling little toddler left at Massa St. Kenelm's house, all fixed up in nicest clothes I eber seed."

"Then brother Albert knows I am not his sister, does he?"

"No, he don't."

"And why not?"

"'Cause I nebbber told him. He had a little sister Octavia, but she war taken away and you left in her place."

A little cry burst from the maiden's lips.

"Your father—dat's ole Massa St. Kenelm, war nigh 'bout distracted when he found his little baby girl war gone, but he come to me and said: 'Shady, keep dis a secret, dis changin' ob children. I know who done de hellish deed, and I'll never cease to hunt him till I gits my child. I will never come back till I finds her—my Octavia.' He told me to call you Octavia—just like his child—to treat you kindly, 'cause you couldn't help it. He said if he didn't git back inside ob twelve years, to tell you and Albert de secret, and now it's told, honey."

"Why didn't brother Albert know it the time the exchange was made?"

"He war away down South gwine to college; and when de wah broke out, he went right from de college into de army, and staid dar four long years; so de two years at college, and de four in de Confederate army, made six years," and the old negress illustrated the fact on her fingers, "and all dat time he nebbber see his little sister. So when he come home, he nebbber knowed but you war Octavia, you'd growed so. In de meanwhile, de news come to us dat Massa St. Kenelm had been killed by de Lincoln sojers in Arkansas; and it war so, honey, for de whole thing war in de papers."

Octavia wept bitterly. Old Aunt Shady wept too.

The sound of hooved feet suddenly started them both. They raised their eyes and beheld that fearful apparition that had so startled the settlers a night or two before—that terrible creature that Dakota Dan had called a Centaur—a creature with a human head and face upon the shoulders and body of a large deer. It stood upon the opposite side of the river staring at them with its glassy eyes and white-bearded face—so horrible, so repulsive, that the souls of the women sickened with an indescribable abhorrence, and with a scream of terror they turned and fled toward camp.

An alarm at once spread through the whole camp, and soldiers and settlers at once flew to their arms and formed in line of battle. But all became quiet when the cause of the excitement became known.

"What is this creature you call Centaur?" asked Captain Rushton.

Dakota Dan described the animal, and then, accompanied by the captain and a squad of soldiers, they repaired to the river bank where the women had seen it. But to their disappointment, they found it had disappeared. Footprints, however, were found in the yielding soil along the bank, which was evidence of its having been there.

And so none the wiser, the party returned to camp.

By this time the sun was nearly down, and a gray mist was gathering in the valley.

A faint noise like the rumble of distant thunder was heard afar-off in the mountains. Dakota Dan shook his head ominously.

"We're goin' to have a storm, boys, I'm afeard. You can hear de old weather-dog a-growlin' over in de mountain now. The rain may not reach us, from de clouds, but I'll bet it'll come a-boomin' down de river from up de mountain. But, let it come, captain; I've determined on one p'int, and that is to follow the track of that animal to its hidin'-place. I'm goin' to know whether it's man or beast, flesh or spirit."

"But night is coming on; how can you see to follow the track?"

"Smoke of Jerusalem, man! don't you know anything 'bout Dakota Dan, de great Triangle of the West? Humility, my dog, dar, can follow a year-ole trail, and I can follow him. Humility leads, I command, and Patience, my mare here, brings up de rear in reg'lar military order. Both of 'em animals are as sagacious critters, cap'n, as ever sunk tooth or boxed American soil. That's good blood in them, cap'n, as ever leaped in equine or canine veins. I could trace their pedigree ob'ar back to Noah and de ark, I swar I can. But, cap'n, I'm goin'. Keep lots of guards out to-night, and then post men to watch de guards. That's no tellin' what'll happen in this world."

The ranger took his dog and left the camp.

The night came on dark and gloomy. The wind howled dismally through the pines, and rumbled in hollow, sullen tones among the hills. The gathering storm moaned in the distance.

(To be continued—commenced in No. 266.)

Too Sharp.

AN EPISODE IN THE LIFE OF A MAN OF THE WORLD.

BY MAURICE SOLOMON.

"A gentleman of means and elegant taste, aged 35, wishes to form the acquaintance of a young lady of refinement, with a view to matrimony. Address Apollo, Box 56, P. O."

WHILE leisurely scanning the morning newspaper the above advertisement met my eye. There was nothing peculiar in the wording of it that attracted my attention, for dozens of the same kind occupy space in the papers every day; but, as it were, like a flash of lightning, a whimsical idea entered my mind, which I re-

solved to execute merely for the sake of pastime—"only this and nothing more."

Perhaps it will not be out of place to mention who and what I am—my name, position, occupation and the benefit I am to the world at large.

To begin with, I am an orphan. Ah, I know I already have the sympathy of the reader, especially if it be one of the fair sex. Orphans, it is almost needless to say, as a general thing, are objects of commiseration; whether I deserve to be regarded as such the sequel will show.

My maternal parent took her departure for the unknown world when I was little more than a child. My father was a man of large means, and when he died, which was soon after my graduation from college, he left me the sole heir of an immense fortune.

I could make good and ample use of money; I had always associated with polite society, and, being possessed of elegant taste and education, was well qualified to enjoy my inheritance. I had studied for the legal profession, but my wish and ambition had always been to be a man of leisure; and, at my father's death, having every requisite to gratify my aspirations, I relinquished my legal studies, and departed for Europe, intending to make a tour of the continent.

I visited all the prominent cities, beheld all the famed sights and curiosities which the Old World contains; and, after an absence of five years, I returned to my native land.

Though I had been through most, if not all, phases of gayety and adventure, I was not a blase when I landed in New York. Being of a happy, jovial nature, there was much which continually pleased and interested me.

I am a close observer of human nature, and it has always been a source of amusement to me to study the peculiarities and foibles of both sexes. Club life, and the society into which I immediately entered, offered a fine field in which to exercise my penchant; so, though life was one continual round of pleasure, its gayeties did not pall on me; for to me enjoyment had become second nature, and no matter what form it took, as long as it smacked not of grossness, I fairly revelled in it.

Such, in brief, is your humble servant, George Parkhurst.

But, to return to the matrimonial advertisement. Now, thought I, what will be better fun than replying to this notice? It will be a little amusement off the beaten track, and I'll do it, by Jove!

I was at once adept in imitating the different styles of writing, therefore it would be an easy matter for me to give my penmanship a lady-like appearance. Accordingly I procured some finely tinted note-paper and envelopes, stamped with the initial letter "S," and indited the following innuive:

FROM SYLPH TO APOLLO.

June 15, 186—

DEAR SIR:—While perusing this morning's *Gladiator* your advertisement attracted my attention, and, though I know not what impelled me to take this step, I resolved to answer it.

I have long sought for a being that I could love, a man possessed of the finest qualities of mind and heart, but, alas! have sought in vain. Nurtured, I may say, in the lap of luxury, surrounded by people of wealth and refinement, still I am unhappy. Why? I sigh for a congenial soul—one whose every thought will respond to mine. The following lines fitly express what I would say:

"Two souls with but a single thought,
Two hearts that beat as one."

I number among my acquaintances many estimable young men; but for them all I entertain no deeper feeling than ordinary friendship, for they are lacking in that indefinable something, as it were, for which I yearn.

I may have what some would call peculiar ideas upon the subject of love and marriage—I mean an exaggerated ideal in connection with both—but I shall never wed until I meet my ideal.

It is my wish that a few letters shall pass between us, and that we shall therein freely express our thoughts upon different topics, so that, before a meeting takes place, we may be able to judge if our ideas harmonize. In conclusion I will say, that I cannot analyze or account for the feeling which has prompted me to write to you, unless it is fate, which is the view I am inclined to take of this, on my part, strange proceeding; for I am an implicit believer in fatality.

For the present I sign myself, yours,

SYLPH, Box 14, P. O.

FROM APOLLO TO SYLPH.

June 17, 186—

MY BELOVED SYLPH:—Pardon me if I take too much liberty at the outset in addressing you as "my beloved," instead of dear Miss; but I feel as if already you are the one who is going to fill the void in my aitherto aimless life, and make me the happiest of men. Therefore, I repeat it, if there has been any excess of freedom on my part in calling you my beloved Sylph, if you have not excused it thus far, I am sure you will ere you have finished reading this missive.

My heart throbs responsive to the pure and womanly sentiments your letter contains. I am sure that none but a noble woman could give utterance to such beautiful and whole-souled thoughts. Involuntarily you have poured forth the desires of a heart that sighs for a kindred heart—that has sought for its mate in vain.

I shall not be disappointed if you are not beautiful; for it is not mere physical beauty for which I look in the woman who is to be my wife, but the nobler attributes of the mind and heart—an intense appreciation for the beautiful in nature and art, and a kind, loving disposition. All these qualities you possess, I am sure.

Your words prove that you have a sympathetic heart, and a longing for a companion in whom you can confide, and to whom you can intrust your inmost thoughts and feelings. I can assure you that by me they will be held sacred, and will be cherished as the emanations of a pure and true woman.

If it be not premature at this early stage of our epistolary acquaintance, may I request you to send me a photograph of yourself? Hoping that ere much time has winged its flight, I shall gaze upon you in propria persona, I remain, lovingly yours,

APOLLO.

SECOND LETTER FROM SYLPH TO APOLLO.

June 19, 186—

DEAR APOLLO:—Since receiving your kind letter a change seems to have come over my life. A feeling of happiness permeates my whole being. The world appears brighter, better, more joyful; existence more worth the having. My heart is as light as that of a bird's in springtime, and all the day snatches of song pour forth from between my lips, just as in the happy days of old when I was a joyous, care-free schoolgirl.

And you, my dear friend, I must thank for all this happiness. What is this unseen influence you exercise over me? I cannot define

or analyze it, neither do I seek to. I am content to rest under this blissful cloud, if I may so call the sweet, ecstatic feeling that is continually with me both day and night, asking not what the future has in store, but satisfied with the present.

I doubt not but that we have convinced each other, strange though such an assertion may be, that there already exists a mutual esteem which, in time, may possibly assume the form of a high and fervent regard.

Trusting that you will write again soon—for I am oh! so anxious to hear from you, I remain, now, your loving

SYLPH.

P. S.—I inclose my photograph, and hope you will return the compliment; for, you know, a fair exchange is no robbery.

SECOND LETTER FROM APOLLO TO SYLPH.

June 22, 186—

MY BELOVED SYLPH:—Once again an old saying is verified—that the most interesting part of a woman's letter is the postscript. When I opened your missive I was in such a flutter of excitement and eager expectation that I did not perceive that your photograph had slipped out of the folds of the paper, and that it had fallen onto the floor at my feet. But your P. S. informed me that you had sent it, and it required but a short search—a glance downward—before I succeeded in finding it.

There you were at my feet! Entranced, I gazed upon the beautiful being whose face was upturned to mine; and I thought there was that in the expression of the portrait—a sort of yearning look—which begged for sympathy and love. I reverently took it up—for it was not meet that thou shouldst kneel at my feet, but I at thine—gazed long and fondly upon it, when a strange, sweet feeling stole o'er me, and thrilled every fiber of heart and brain.

Suddenly, and with ecstatic joy, I pressed the picture to my lips, and showered upon it kisses burning with a chaste and holy love. The time flew by unheeded. Hours passed away, but still enraptured I gazed upon that counterfeit of your charming self. I was dreaming—"dreaming the happy hours away."

I have just finished reading "Pendennis," for the second time. I fancy you are the embodiment of all those graces of mind and heart of which Thackeray makes his sweet Laura the exponent—gentle, pure, forgiving and unselfish, lavishing your wealth of affection upon your fellow-creature, even unto the humblest; thus gaining their good-will and friendship—creating as it were a heaven of your own glowing with love and sunshine.

En passant, I attended the opera last evening. Of course you have heard the new company in "Norma," and it is sufficient for me to say that the performance was excellent.

But I prefer the German to the Italian music. I love to listen to the dreamy, soft melodies of Beethoven, whose compositions can only be fitly described by the word divine. One of my special favorites is his "Moonlight" sonata; and, as you ladies have a habit of expressing yourselves, it's just lovely.

Ah, darling! when shall we meet? Why prolong the time? How I long for the hour when I shall look upon you, whisper sweetest words in your ear, feel your heart beat in unison with mine, and listen to your frank, tender avowal of love. Why should we be longer separated? It is destined we shall be all in all to each other; as you say:

"Two souls with but a single thought,
Two hearts that beat as one."

Ah, when you answer this, tell me that I may come, may see you, and drink to the full of my already-overflowing cup of joy.

I inclose my photograph. I am not, as you will perceive, an Apollo Belvedere, but I know you admire the qualities of heart and mind more than mere exterior beauty of person; and were I the plainest of men, you would still love me as does your loving APOLLO.

THIRD LETTER FROM SYLPH TO APOLLO.

June 23, 186—

MY BELOVED APOLLO:—I was charmed, nay, delighted with your last letter, and would that it had been twice as long.

I requested, in my first epistle, a moderately lengthy correspondence between us, before a meeting should take place; but, on reading your last missive, I perceive that there is no reason to prolong the correspondence, as I am satisfied that our thoughts and aspirations are congenial; and, I confess, I am anxious to behold the being who has awakened within my breast the purest and sweetest of passions—love.

Therefore I will meet you on Thursday next, between ten and eleven o'clock, on the upper end of the Mall, at Central Park.

Till then I remain your devoted and loving

SYLPH.

I must confess that my curiosity was aroused, and that I desired to see this fool of a man—for the manner in which I had deceived him, and the lavish romance his effusions betrayed, convinced me that he was a sentimental fool—and witness his amazement when informed of the true state of affairs, and have a good laugh at his expense.

The appointed day was delightful and bright, and I strolled through the Park toward the Mall, keeping a sharp lookout for Apollo, whose photograph and letters I carried in my pocket. I arrived at the designated spot, but among the many people walking about I did not perceive the object of my search. Presently I sat down where I could observe all who passed by. I kept my eyes on the alert, and not in vain. Probably half an hour had elapsed, when the exact copy of the photograph came slowly walking up the Mall. There was no doubt about the matter in my mind—it was certainly the gracious and love-stricken Apollo.

I followed him, and when he was a short distance up the Ramble, and we were free from observation, I stepped beside him, and said:

"Noble Apollo, I would speak with thee. Behold your loving Sylph!" and I gave my long-repressed merriment full vent, and laughed till the tears poured down my face.

"Sir, what do you mean?" he cried. "I don't understand you. Are you crazy?"

"What do I mean?" I answered. "Well, my dear fellow, I pity you, but you have been most infernally taken in, and own up that I hold the winning cards." I added, good-naturedly,

"Do you intend to insult me?" he angrily exclaimed. "Explain this strange proceeding immediately, sir, or I will make you feel the weight of this cane." His face was distorted with passion, and he looked by no means the gentle creature he had made himself out in his letters.

"Perhaps I have given you good cause to be offended, but I only meant it as a joke, my friend," said I, deprecatingly, being just a little afraid that he might become incensed at me, and carry his threat into execution.

"Meant what as a joke? Surely you must be insane, and I think I had better call a policeman and let him take care of you."

Not wishing to become notorious through the medium of the newspapers, as a lunatic, I

stopped him as he turned in the direction where a gray-coated officer stood, and drawing forth his two letters, said:

"Did you not write these and send me your photograph?"

"No, sir," he replied, after examining them, "I did not. I never saw them before, so you are mistaken in the person."

"I beg your pardon then, and hope you will excuse, what is to you, my strange conduct," said I, somewhat abashed. Bidding him good-morning, I walked away.

Well, well, thought I, so he is not my Apollo, after all, but one who certainly bears a great resemblance to him. But what an extraordinary likeness!

I should have to make an appointment for another day, and agree upon some signal by which we might recognize each other, was the vexatious conclusion to which I came. Yes, I was vexed at having made such a great mistake, but I was amused also; for the scene between the stranger and myself appealed strongly to my sense of the ludicrous, which, I may say, is highly developed.

As I strolled hotelward through the Park, I met a lady friend of mine, a Miss Vernon, whose acquaintance I had formed while in Europe, and we had both returned on the same steamer, so that we had become what is termed intimate acquaintances. We entered into quite an agreeable conversation; she invited me to accompany her home and take lunch with her, and having nothing better to do, I accepted the invitation.

Well, it was some time after lunch, and Miss Vernon and I were in the parlor, discussing various matters, when the door bell rung, and a visitor was shown in by the servant.

Ye gods! who do you think it was? Nobody, more or less, than my friend with whom I had the interesting meeting in the Park.

"Mr. Grover, allow me to introduce my friend, Mr. Parkhurst," said Miss Vernon.

"Mr. Parkhurst and I have had the pleasure of meeting once before, I believe," he remarked, somewhat ironically.

For a moment my usual sang froid deserted me, and I was too bewildered to say anything.

"I was at the Park this morning," observed Mr. Grover, still with his eyes bent upon me in a meaning way, "for the purpose of making a sketch of a very pretty landscape for a friend of mine who sails for Europe next week, and desires to take it with him."

"Indeed!" remarked Miss Vernon. "I was up there also, but we did not happen to meet. Won't you favor us with the 'Moonlight' sonata?" she added, in the same breath.

He seated himself at the piano, and commenced to play. When he had finished, she made the following remark, which particularly attracted my attention:

"Mr. Grover is a great admirer of Beethoven and Thackeray, and as I share his admiration, we never tire of discussing their merits; though I myself do not profess to be a very excellent critic."

"Yes," chimed in Mr. Grover, "in music my favorite is the immortal Beethoven; in literature, Thackeray; and the composition of the former I like best is the one I have just played; and of the latter, 'Pendennis.'"

How strange that I should meet a person whom I took for Apollo, hear the Moonlight sonata, and have "Pendennis" mentioned in my presence, within a few hours!

Now, Mr. Grover, thought I, as these circumstances revolved in my mind, I have got you in a tight place. To begin with, the photograph in my possession is as perfect a copy of you as could possibly exist; you are extremely fond of Beethoven and Thackeray; and, to cap the climax, you were at the Park this morning.

What a chain of circumstantial evidence! Many a man has been hanged on less convincing proof than that.

If you are not Apollo, then I'm not George Parkhurst. You are very sharp-witted, with all your romance; and this morning, when I addressed you, it flashed upon you in a moment that you had been duped, and you resolved to put a bold face on the matter and not acknowledge what a sentimental fool you had made of yourself. If you can deceive a man of the world like me, with such an array of proof before me, then I'm very much mistaken in my powers of perception. Perhaps Miss Vernon is acquainted with his handwriting. By Jove! I'll wait till he departs, and then make a confidante of her. Such were my conclusions.

I was resolved not to be balked in my sport. Besides, I desired to tell the story to my friends who belonged to the same club that I did, as it would establish for me a reputation as a practical joker, a qualification upon which I rather prided myself. Call me vain, if you will; I plead guilty to the accusation.

In about an hour Mr. Grover departed.

"Excuse me," I said, "Miss Vernon, but I should like you to give me a little information in regard to Mr. Grover."

"With the greatest pleasure," she replied. "He is an artist, possessed of considerable means, and a good position in society. That is about all I know of him, except that he is a gentleman of high culture and refinement."

"Thanks," said I. "Do you think this picture bears any resemblance to him?" I added, drawing the one from my pocket and handing it to her.

"Why, where did you get this from?" she asked, betraying the greatest surprise.

"Come," I answered, "I will make a confidante of you."

Thereupon I told her the whole story. How she laughed! In all the days of my life I have never seen man or woman laugh so immoderately.

"Now," I remarked, when I had finished, "don't you think he's the party?"

"Do I think he's the party?" she replied, her merriment nearly choking her; "of course I do not."

"Why, what do you mean?" I cried.

"I mean that, now I am in full possession of all the circumstances, I can solve the mystery. You having been so kind as to make me your confidante, I will reciprocate in the same manner."

"Would you be greatly surprised if I were to tell you that Apollo is a woman, that I am well acquainted with her, and that I know of this delicate affair when it was first started? Excuse me for a few minutes," and she left the room.

Well, if a thunderbolt had fallen at my feet, I could not have been more astonished than when she made that declaration about Apollo being a woman.

I will tell the balance of my story in the fewest possible words. She returned presently, and taking a seat beside me, said:

"Do you recognize these?" handing me the letters and picture I had sent to Apollo, as she spoke.

"Do I recognize them? Why, of course I do. They are mine," I exclaimed, in astonishment.

"Well, then, what would you think if I were to inform you that Apollo is not only a woman, but is sitting by your side—in a word, that I am he?"

"Two souls with but a single thought,
Two hearts that beat as one," she said, in a mock-sentimental manner.

The situation was too ludicrous, and surprise, astonishment, gave way before the fit of merriment in which I indulged, and in which she joined me.

"Oh, dear! this is too funny for anything," she at last cried, the tears pouring from her eyes.

You would have thought we were a pair of grinning idiots. For at least five minutes we did nothing but stare at each other and laugh. When the paroxysm had spent its force, she remarked:

"Wishing to have an amusement that was somewhat novel, I put the advertisement in the *Gladiator*. From the numerous answers I received I selected yours as being the most intensely romantic. I had two pictures of Mr. Grover, and sent you one, which, of course, accounts for your being so certain that he was Apollo; then, by a strange coincidence, you met him this morning, and then again here this afternoon, when you heard subjects discussed which tended to strengthen your belief."

"I went to the Park this morning, expecting to see the romantic Sylph, but I by no means intended to speak to her, and you were also there for a similar purpose. What sport it would have been if Mr. G. had given you a 'slight caneing'?" she said, mischievously.

She continued: "It is a clear case of tit for tat. We are respectively the biters that have been bit, though I think you have fared more badly than I. We both had hopes of laughing at somebody else's folly, and we are justly punished by having the laugh turned on ourselves. Oh, Mr. Parkhurst, let us acknowledge that we are not as 'cute as we thought we were; though I must say this adventure has caused me no little amusement."

I have but one more remark to add: that if there is anything in this world which I admire, it is a woman who can appreciate a practical joke; and I testified my appreciation for Miss Vernon by falling in love with her, but—she married Grover!



A FANCY.

BY FRANK DAVES.

Many a night have I wandered alone
Gloomy and sad along the shore
Of the wild and terrible ocean,
And listened to his roar.

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NEW YORK, JUNE 19, 1875.

ber. All communications, subscriptions, and letters on business, should be addressed to
BEADLE AND ADAMS, PUBLISHERS,
98 WILLIAM ST., NEW YORK.

A well-known newsdealer, in a late business-

I DISLIKE fussy folks, for they are just the opposite of being agreeable and pleasant companions, and it makes one have a crawling creeping sensation when they are about. You

The passengers will rest there until the storm above has abated. The ship will then be raised with a derrick, and if the passengers express a

Frank sincerity, though no invited guest, is free to all, and brings his welcome with him.

Unanswered questions on hand will appear next week

"JUNE."

BY FRANK M. IMBRIE.

She came so still, we scarce could hear the rustle
Of opal garments, draped with filmy gauze;
So swift, we caught but aureate glint and shimmer;
So near, then gone, with but a moment's pause,
Like memoried joy, that smiling, bids us catch it,
Then mocking, taunts us, as it luring draws.

She opened her volume, bound in gold and azure,
Scattering its leaves, by zephyr's weird unrest;
Some, fluttering earthward, dotted lawn and meadow,
Bequeathing hues, to deck her emerald crest;

Some, 'neath the heavens, unrolled their sapphirine
brightness,
Till earth and sky was garbed in gorgeous dress.

She filled the blossoms' chalice, proffered to her,
With rippling draughts of odoriferous, sunshine-
wine;

When dreamy languor stole she gave elixir
From crystal dew, wooed from the summertime,
Then whispered to the notes, pulsing softly,
To "Ring her triumph in the flower-bell's chime."

As twinkling vespers cleft the twilight quiet,
And bird-notes rippled down wood arches green,
An unseen presence lit the bright star-tapers
To guard the slumbers of this summer queen.

White Luna folded round her dreamlike treasure
Her own soft robe of radiant, studded sheen.
Her burnished shield made brooklets fret their borders,
Where feathery oresses slake their living thirst;

But gloaming cooled their waveless, placid surface,
Tells of no noonday strife, no tempest-burst.
So we, in life's sweet June-time, pause and question
If hope's bright blooms could be by blight accursed.

Some sunbright June we listened to the voices
Of moonlight, sunlight, blossoms, breezes, love;
Then, all unwilling, heard the audience troubled,
Vibrating, as with flight of wounded dove;

But then, as now, some cheering, blithesome presence
Swung hope-lit lamps in the blue arch above.

"Whose Was the Sin?"

BY MARY REED CROWELL.

"PROMISE ME! promise me, the last words
I shall ever hear in this world! Swear, by
your hope of meeting me again at the judg-
ment-seat, that you never, never will touch
a glass of wine! It goes with the Milford blood,
on the women's side, and you're a Milford out-
and-out! Swear it, Edith—to your dying moth-
er, that you never will follow the awful
courses of your dead-uncle and gone ancestors."

The voice rung out sharp, agonized; the bril-
liant, glassy eyes gleamed momentarily; and
Edith Milford shivered with horror and pain
and sorrow as her quivering lips made an
answer.

"Mother—you know I never will touch wine.
Have I ever? must the Milford taint necessari-
ly corrupt me?"

"You haven't seen as much as I have seen,
Edith! Give me your oath to take to my grave
with me—swear it—never touch it! Edith, be
—quick!"

The voice suddenly failed, and the faint gasps
groped for Edith's hand in an eager, en-
treating way.

"Mother, mother—anything—I swear it—
mother!—for God's sake speak to me again!"

A brief, contented smile flitted radiantly
over the faded face, and then—Edith Milford
was an orphan; alone, in all the world, and
not fifty dollars in her possession. A fair,
beautiful girl, graceful as a lily, gentle and
tender as a child, and with the cursed blood of
the Milfords running in her blue veins! God
pity her!

An elegant room, draped in light azure silken
fittings, and furnished in regally luxuriant
style to match.

A portly, self-possessed lady reclining in a
capacious blue damask divan, toying with the
silver fringes, and seemingly vastly enjoying
the wide-eyed, delightful wonder on Edith Mil-
ford's face as her dark-gray eyes glowed to
liquid blackness while she took in the elegant
luxury of the room.

"Well, child—will it suit you? do you think
you can be content here with only your uncle
and I?"

Mrs. Gardner smiled kindly as she spoke,
and Edith's eyes overflowed with thankful
tears.

"Oh, aunt Mary! please never ask me if I
can be content. Rather make me be all my
life trying to prove my gratitude to you in
giving me a home where everything exceeds
my wildest dreams!"

"It is your uncle and I who feel grateful to
you, dear, for consenting to come and add the
charm of youth to our lonely, dreary elegance.
What's the good of wealth with no one to share
or enjoy it! And since poor Nora died, I have
been determined her child should be my child,
to compensate partly for the long, sad estrange-
ment between us, that began long before you
were born—when she would persist in marry-
ing Roy Milford, whom everybody knew was
on the down-track every drinking-man takes—
whom every one prophesied would end just as
he did—just as all the family did—women and
all. But that's all past—long ago, and we
won't talk of it any more. Come sit by me,
dear, and let's plan for our summer tour. Shall
it be Niagara or Newport first?"

And so Edith, who had seemed suddenly to have
opened its golden gates to the dead, unchained
girl, about whom already people were raving,
Men over her beauty, women about her
costumes, her style, her sweetness.

"You are nearly perfect to-night, Edith.
Your dress is a marvel, and Cerise has certainly
charmed every hair in your coiffure. Turn
around, child, let me see if the sash is draped
gracefully."

Mrs. Gardner's watchful eyes could find no
flaw in the elegant toilet, white-beaded silk
grenadine, that glistened like dewdrops with
the slightest movement of her body.

"You look well," she said, slowly, contentedly,
"perfect, except a paleness I don't quite like.
Where are your roses, child?"

Edith laughed.

"I think the excitement of expecting to meet
the wonderful Mr. Leamington must have ban-
ished them. I have heard of other young ladies
who fainted at the honor—after it was over."

An indulgent smile beamed on Mrs. Gardner's
face.

"Such nonsense! although I will say, Edith,
there isn't Mr. Leamington's match in the city,
and the girl who secures him will be the ever-
lasting envy of all the rest."

"A desirable fate, certainly, auntie. Now,
am I ready to go forth to break lances with
this paragon of men?"

"All but your roses. We must conjure a
dainty pink to your cheeks, for I have heard
Mr. Leamington say he especially admired a
faint bloom."

Edith frowned.

"Not paint, auntie? I never will do that—
never!"

Mrs. Gardner smiled at her girlish earnest-
ness.

"Certainly not paint, child. I detest lily-
white and carmine as you do. No—you only
need a slight stimulant to call up a little ex-

citement, and then—the carnation will bloom
to Mr. Leamington's entire satisfaction, I'll
warrant."

As she spoke, Mrs. Gardner poured a table-
spoonful of red port into a tiny crystal cham-
pagne-glass, and handed it to Edith.

"There are your roses, my dear; why—why
—what on earth—"

She paused in sheer amazement. If Edith
had been pale before, she was ghastly now;
and her eyes were full of horror and disgust.

"Take it away—oh, auntie, take it away!
I wouldn't touch it for a fortune!"

Mrs. Gardner looked steadily at her.

"I don't quite understand you."

The tears rushed to Edith's eyes.

"I made my mother a promise on her dy-
ing bed never to tempt the curse that may be
dormant in my blood. Dear auntie, you are
very kind, and I thank you, but, don't you
see, I cannot do it!"

A slow, sarcastic smile crept around Mrs.
Gardner's lips, and when she spoke, it was in
a slightly contemptuous voice Edith had never
dreamed could proceed from her.

"I am not romantic myself, so I fail to ap-
preciate your feelings. However, I do know
I feel deeply wounded to think you would sup-
pose me capable of offering you an injury."

She set the glass quietly down on her dress-
ing-bureau, Edith watching her with quiver-
ing lip, cut to the quick by this sudden cool-
ness.

"Auntie, dear, please don't be angry with
me! You know how I love you, how grateful
I am to you, how I wish to always please and
obey you."

"It is not necessary to plead your excuse,
Edith. I merely remarked I feel keenly that
you could, for a moment, suppose me capable
of doing anything that would not add to your
welfare."

A strange, almost wild look came into her
dilated eyes.

"Aunt Mary—you think it will be for my
welfare?"

Her voice was inexpressibly strange; a low,
hesitating, hoarse noise, frightfully unlike its
customary music.

Mrs. Gardner smiled frigidly.

"Is it likely, after all I have tried to do for
you, I would deliberately seek to harm you?
Faugh! the miserable subject is worn disgust-
ingly threadbare."

And you would be pleased if I obeyed you,
aunt Mary! I owe you obedience, don't I?"

Still the same constrained voice; the breath
coming in gasps.

"It is not a question of obedience or court-
esy. You have impugned my motive, and I
am hurt."

One second of wild, whirling agony; one
second, when the girl was shivered between
two tempests, when it seemed duty urged both
ways; and then—alas! for the mother in her
grave! alas! for the taint in the Milford blood!
—she swallowed the luscious, mellow wine!

"You must be right, auntie. I feel stronger
and braver already. Forgive me, will you,
dear auntie?"

Mrs. Gardner relented then; her victory
was complete.

"You foolish darling! as if I, who love you
better than all the world, would withhold my
pardon or do you harm! Now go, dear! the
carriage is waiting, and the roses blooming
for Mr. Leamington's admiration. Good luck
go with you!"

That was the first of it.

"My darling, if you would only listen to
Dr. Starivelle! He assures me all you need is
a few weeks in the country where there is ab-
solute quiet."

John Leamington leaned lovingly over his
wife's couch—a dainty, white silk affair, on
which Edith lay, her face flushed, her beau-
tiful face sharpened and querulous, and her
lovely liquid gray eyes shadowed by an al-
most impalpable strangeness—and yet John
Leamington saw it, with a deadly sinking of
his fond, true heart, that he had given unhesi-
tatingly to Edith Milford, the first time he
met her, a radiant, charming girl in shining
white attire, with a glowing blackness in her
wonderful eyes, and a delicious, fleeting,
peachy tint on her round cheeks.

That had been a year ago; and now, Edith,
the wife of six months, the idol and darling of
her husband, lay on her invalid couch, flushed,
but not with health; feverish, irritable, petu-
lant.

Mr. Leamington sat beside her, earnest,
grave, thoughtful, watching the evanescent
beauty on her face, and wondering, as he
caught glimpses of that unearthly shadow in
her bright eyes, if it were really true that Dr.
Starivelle had spoken the truth when he as-
sured him that "nothing serious was the mat-
ter with Mrs. Leamington, nothing whatever."
Only a little nervous prostration—the result
of her charmingly-performed and arduous du-
ties as queen of society; a little chronic rest-
lessness and excitement that a few weeks of
perfect respite would positively dispel.

He had told Edith this, in his tender,
thoughtful way.

"I will secure you the best of attention, if
you will go down to Merivale, dear. It is a
lovely spot, quiet, restful—just what you need.
And I will come every night, so you will not
be lonely."

An irritable frown corrugated her fore-
head.

"It would be the death of me, John! The
very idea of such a place makes me shudder.
I know better than Dr. Starivelle what my
system needs. I must have excitement—ex-
citement all the while. Quiet kills me. John,
please give me my tonic—it is eleven o'clock,
isn't it?"

A troubled look at his wife's words crossed
his face, as he passed a wine-glass of "tonic,"
rich, delicious port, prescribed by Dr. Starivelle,
to stimulate appetite and generally "tone"
the system. Edith took it in her
trembling hands and drank it almost greedily.

"Port always helps me, John, and this is
rarely good."

She gave him one of her old, sweet smiles.

"You evidently have an appreciative taste,"
he returned, gayly—that smile had delighted
him into momentary forgetfulness of his un-
easiness.

"Indeed, I can appreciate any and all good
things, yourself the best of all, my dear, kind
husband, and you mustn't send me off in the
miserable, stupid country; keep me home
here, where I can have my drive in the Park
every day, and my shopping-time, and my port
regularly. I may stay, mayn't I?"

And with her arms around his neck, John
Leamington promised. Is there a man who
wouldn't?

John Leamington stood face to face with Dr.
Eldred—the most renowned physician that
New York city boasts of; his face pale as ashes,
his features working in convulsive agony.

Dr. Eldred was calm, pitiful, fatefully ear-
nest, as his doleful words fell on the husband's
ears.

"It gives me pain to say it, Mr. Leaming-
ton, and God knows I would spare you the
slightest pang. But when I know your wife is
dying of intemperance, when I remember she
comes of Milford stock, and when I know your
own physician is ignorantly feeding her faster
to death, I feel there must be no evasion of the
terrible question. Mrs. Leamington is fated
to die, and soon. God pity you both!"

The husband staggered into a chair, his very
manhood struck by this terrible blow.

"There is nothing—no hope—no—"

Dr. Eldred laid his hand on his throbbing
pulse.

"Unless Heaven's mercy takes her in some
other sudden way—there is no hope. Try to
bear it; remember she is hardly to blame. Re-
member the awful legacy she had, and always
pity and forgive."

Afterward, John Leamington went away;
never again the same man that had entered
Dr. Eldred's office.

He walked home in a dazed, uncertain way,
and people looked pityingly at him as he pass-
ed, and once, on his unheeding ear, fell a word
of commiseration from a lawyer, on a cor-
ner.

"How hard he takes it, don't he? He must
have heard it down at the office."

At his door Dr. Starivelle met him, solemn,
portly, resigned.

"Bear it like a man, Leamington, and re-
member she never knew what hurt her. Con-
solation of the brain—positively painless."

Leamington stared helplessly at him, and a
sudden suspicion darted into the doctor's
brain.

"Good Heavens—haven't you heard!—your
wife—didn't you see the messenger I sent to
tell you of the accident at the Rink?"

Leamington's white lips moved feebly.

"Is Edith dead?"

The doctor gazed curiously at him a moment,
then wrung his hand sympathetically.

"Poor fellow—Edith is dead."

A moment of blinding agony; then, a ra-
diance shot over his face.

"Thank God!"

And to this day, Dr. Starivelle never knows
the cause of that strange thanksgiving.

Victoria:

OR,

THE HEIRESS OF CASTLE CLIFFE.

BY MRS. MAY AGNES FLEMING,
AUTHOR OF "THE DARK SECRET," "AWFUL
MYSTERY," "THE RIVAL BROTHERS," ETC.

CHAPTER XIII.—CONTINUED.

"HURRAH for Tom Shirley!" said a laugh-
ing voice in the crowd, and "Hurrah! hurrah!
hurrah for Tom Shirley!" shouted the multi-
tude, catching the infection, until the tall May-
pole, and the ground under their feet, seemed
to ring with the echo. It was all so sudden
and so stunningly loud, that the May Queen,
half-startled, snatched away her hand, and
looked round her bewildered, and even Tom
Shirley was startled, for that giant gazed
round at the yelling mob, completely taken
aback by his enthusiastic reception.

"What the demon do the good people mean?
Have they all gone mad, Barbara, or do they
intend making a May Queen of me, too?"

"They certainly ought, if they have any
taste!" said the girl. "But do let me look at
you again, and make sure that it is really Tom
Shirley!"

Tom doffed his Scotch cap and made her a
courtly bow.

"Certainly! Your majesty may look as
much as you like. You won't see anything
better worth looking at, if you search for a
month of Sundays. I promise you that!"

The young lady, trying to look grave, but
with a little smile rippling round her red lips,
began at the toes of his Wellington boots, scruti-
nized him carefully to the topmost kink of
his curly head, and recommending there, got
down to the soles of his boots again, before
she was prepared to vouch for his identity.

"It is yourself, Tom! Nobody else in the
world was ever such a Brobdingnag as you! If
you had only come a little earlier, you might
have saved them the trouble of seeking a May-
pole; and just fancy how pretty you would
look, twined round with garlands of roses, and
a crown of silver lilies on your head!"

Mr. Tom drew himself up to the full extent
of his six feet, four inches, and looked down
on the dark, bright, beautiful face, smiling up
at him, under the white roses.

"Well, this is cool! Here, after four years'
absence, during which I might have been dead
and buried, for all she knew, instead of wel-
coming me, and falling on my neck, and em-
bracing me with tears, as any other Christian
would do, she commences the moment she clasps
eyes on me, calling me names, and loading me
with opprobrium, and—"

"Oh, nonsense, Tom! You know I am real-
glad to see you!" said Barbara, giving him her
hand, carelessly, "and as to falling on your
neck, I would have to climb up a ladder or a
fire-escape first, to do it. But there, the band
is playing the 'Lancers,' and everybody is
staring at us; so do, for goodness sake, ask me
to dance, or something, and let us get out of
this!"

"With all the pleasure in life, Miss Black,"
said Tom, in solemn politeness. "May I have
the honor of your hand for the first set? Thank
you! And now—but first, where's—Oh, yes,
here he is. Miss Black, permit me to present
this youthful relative of mine, Mr. Leicester
Cliffe, of Cliffwood, late of everywhere in
general and nowhere in particular—an amiable
young person enough, of rather vagabondish
inclination, it is true, but I don't quite despair
of him yet. Mr. Cliffe, Miss Black."

"You villain! I'll break every bone in your
body!" said Mr. Cliffe, in a savage undertone
to his friend, before turning with a profound
bow to Barbara, whose handkerchief hid an in-
expressible smile. "Miss Black, I trust, knows
Mr. Tom Shirley too well to give any credit to
anything he says. May I beg the honor of
your hand for—"

"You may beg it, but you won't get it," in-
terrupted Tom. "She is mine for the next
set, and as many more as I want—ain't you,
Barbara?"

"For the second time, Miss Black? I'll not
leave you a sound bone from head to foot!" said
Mr. Cliffe, changing his voice with startling
rapidity, as he addressed first the lady and
then the gentleman.

"With pleasure, sir," said Barbara, who was
dying to laugh outright.

And Mr. Leicester Cliffe, favoring her with
another bow, with a menacing glance at his
companion, walked away.

"*Sic transit gloria mundi!* They're waiting
for us, Barbara," said Tom, making a grimace
after his relative.

And Barbara burst out into a silvery and
uncontrollable fit of laughter.

"Tom, I'm ashamed of you! And is that
really Mr. Leicester Cliffe?"

"It really is. What do you know about
him, pray?"

"Nothing. There! he is our *vis-a-vis*—ac-
tually with Caroline Marsh. I have had the
honor of seeing him once before in my life—
that is all!"

"Where?"

"There is a picture at Cliffwood, in the
hall, of a pretty little boy, with long, yellow
curls and blue eyes, that I have looked at many
a time—first, with you and Miss Vic, and af-
terward when I went there alone; and I saw
him on several occasions when he was here six
years ago."

"Six years ago! Why that was just after
you came to Lower Cliffe at first; and I was
here then, and I don't remember anything
about it."

"No, I know you don't; but the way of it
was simple enough. You, and Miss Vic, and
Lady Agnes, and Colonel Shirley, and Miss
Margaret, all left the castle three months after
I came to live here—you to Cambridge, Miss
Vic to her French convent, Miss Margaret to a
London boarding-school, and Lady Agnes and
the colonel to Belgium. Do you compre-
hend?"

"Slightly."

"Well, let us take our place then, for the
quadrille is about to commence. Sir Roland
was going away, too, to Syria—was it not?
And Mr. Leicester came down from Oxford to
spend a week or two before his departure; and
I saw him most every day then, and we were
excellent friends, I assure you."

"Were you? That's odd; for when I was
speaking of you ten minutes ago, he seemed to
know as little about you as I do about the pug-
faced lady."

Barbara smiled and shrugged her pretty
shoulders.

"Out of sight, out of mind! Monsieur has
forgotten me?"

"Oh, the barbarian! As if any one in their
proper senses could ever see you and forget
you! Ever since we parted," said Tom, laying
his hand with pathos on the left side of his
green jacket, "you have been my star by day
and my dream by night—the sun of my exist-
ence, and the cherished idol of my young af-
fections. Don't be laughing; it's truth I'm
telling."

"Bah! don't be talking nonsense! Do you
remember the night you nearly broke your
neck, and I saved you and your two cousins
from the Demon's Tower?"

"That was six years ago—a long stretch to
look back; but as if I could forget anything
you ever had a hand in, Barbara?"

"I'll box your ears, sir, if you keep on mak-
ing an idiot of yourself! You remember I was
up the next day to the castle, and enjoyed the
pleasure of the first chat I ever had with you;
and we had a terrific quarrel, that raged for
at least three days?"

"I remember. I told you that when I grew
up and married Vic, you should be my second
wife, and that whichever I found suited me
best should be first sultana. Well, now, Bar-
bara, to make amends, suppose you become
first, and—"

"Stuff! Tell me where you dropped from
so unexpectedly to-day?"

"From Cliffwood the last place. I came
down with Leicester in last evening's train."

"Are you going to remain?"

"No, indeed. I'm off again to-night."

"Dying visit, truly. Did you come for a
coal, Mr. Tom, and want to get back to Lon-
don with it before it goes out?"

"Not exactly. I came to poke up that su-
perannuated old dame, Mrs. Wilder, with the
intelligence that my lady and suite are to ar-
rive this day month at the castle."

"Is it possible? Are all coming?"

"All. My lady, the colonel, Miss Shirley,
and Miss Margaret Shirley, not to mention a
whole drove of visitors, who are expected down
later in the summer."

"And Miss Vic—is she well, and as pretty
as ever?"

"Pretty! I believe you! 'She's all my
fancy painted her; she's divine,' and her heart
it is no other's, and I'm bound it shall be mine!
Did you hear she was presented at court?"

"I read it in the papers, with a full account
of her diamonds, and moire antique, and honi-
ton lace, and the sensation she created, and
everything else. I suppose she has been hav-
ing a very gay winter," said Barbara, with a
little nervous sigh.

"Stunning! It's her first season out, and
she has made a small regiment of conquests
already. You ought to see her, Barbara, in
her diamonds and lace, looking down on her
multitude of adoring ladies, a princess, and eclips-
ing all the reigning belles of London. One of
her lovers—a poor devil of a poet, who was
half-mad about her—christened her the 'Rose
of Sussex'; and, upon my word, she is far
more widely known by that title than as Miss
Shirley."

"Oh!" said Barbara, drawing in her breath
hard, "if I only were she!"

"If you were," said Tom, echoing the sigh,
"I would wish you to possess a little more
heart. With all her beauty, and her smiles,
and her coquetry, she is as finished a coquette
as ever broke a heart. The girl is made of

self to her all day, as if she had been the greatest lady in the land.

To contest any prize against such a rival was not to be thought of; and, when supper was over, and the stars were out, and the young May moon rose up, the heir of Cliffwood walked home with the cottage-beauty on his arm. Tom Shirley had taken the evening train for London, and there was none to tell tales out of school.

The sea lay asleep in the moonlight, and the fishing-boats danced over the silvery ripples under the hush of the solemn stars.

"Oh, what a night!" exclaimed Barbara. "What a moon that is! and what a multitude of stars! It seems to me," with a light laugh, "they never were so many nor so beautiful before."

"They're all beautiful," said Leicester, speaking of them and looking at her. "But I have seen a star brighter than any there, to-day! Fairest Barbara. Good-night!"

Those same slandering stars watched Mr. Leicester Cliffe slowly riding homeward in their placid light, and watched him fall asleep with his head on his arm, and the same queer half-smile on his lips, to dream of Barbara.

CHAPTER XIV. THE WARNING.

SIR ROLAND CLIFFE sat in his dining-room at Cliffwood—a pleasant room, with a velvet carpet of crimson and white on the floor; crimson satin curtains draping the French windows that opened on a sunny sweep of lawn; pictures on the satin-paneled walls—pretty pictures in gilded frames, of fruit and the chase, with green glimpses of Indian jungles, American prairies and Canadian forests—the latter the work of Sir Roland's heir, Sir Roland himself sat in a great arm-chair of crimson velvet, with gilded back and arms—a corpulent gentleman of fifty, much addicted to that gentlemanly disease, the gout—before an antique mahogany table, draped with the snowiest of damask, strewn with Laskets of silver flageole, heaped with oranges, grapes and nuts, and flanked with sundry cut-glass decanters of ruby port and golden sherry. An open letter lay on the table, in a dainty Italian hand, that began, "My dear brother," and while the May sunshine and breezes floated blandly through the crimson curtains, Sir Roland sipped his pale sherry, munched his walnuts and grapes, and ruminated deeply. He had sat quite alone over his dessert, making his meditations, when right in the middle of an unusually profound one came the sound of a light, quick step on the terrace without, the sweet notes of a clear voice singing, "The Lass o' Gowrie," and the next minute the door was thrown open, and Mr. Leicester Cliffe walked in, with his huge Canadian wolf-dog by his side. The young gentleman wore a shooting costume, and had a gun in his hand; and the seaside sun and wind seemed to agree with him mightily, for there was a glow on his pale cheek and a dancing light in his luminous eyes.

"Late, as usual," was his salutation, as he stood his gun in a corner, and flung his wide-awake on a sofa. "I intended to be the soul of punctuality to-day; but the time goes here one doesn't know how, and I only found out it was getting late by feeling half-famished. Hope I haven't kept you waiting?"

"I have not waited," said Sir Roland. "Ring the bell, and they'll bring your dinner. Been gunning, I see? I hope with more success than usual."

"I am sorry to say not. Loup and I have spent our day and bagged nothing."

"Very shy game yours must be, I think."

"It is!" said Leicester, with emphasis.

"Well, you'll have the chance to aim at game of another sort, soon—high game, too, my boy! Here is a letter from Lady Agnes."

"Indeed!"

"And it contains a pressing invitation for you to go up to London and be present at a ball her ladyship gives in a few days."

"Does it! I won't go!"

"You will go! Listen!"

"Tell Leicester to be sure to come, Roland. I would not have him absent for the world. It is about the last ball of the season, and he will meet scores of old friends, who will be anxious to see him after all those years of headless wandering. And you know there is another, and still stronger reason, my dear brother, for if the proposed alliance between Victoria and him ever becomes an established fact, I am extremely desirous to have it settled, and the engagement publicly made known before we leave London."

Sir Roland laid down the letter at this passage, and looked complacently across the table at his stepson; and that young gentleman, who had been paying profound attention to his dinner, and very little to her lady's letter, now raised an eye haughty and indignant.

"The proposed alliance! What does Lady Agnes mean by that?"

"Precisely what she says, my dear boy. Pass those oranges, if you please."

"That I'm to marry her granddaughter, Miss Victoria Shirley?"

"Exactly! Oh, you needn't fire up like that. The matter is the simplest thing in the world. Lady Agnes and I have intended you for one another ever since little Vic first came from France."

"Much obliged to you both; at the same time, I beg to decline the honor."

"You will do nothing of the kind! It is the most reasonable and well-assorted match in the world. You are both young, both good-looking, both of the same family, yet unrelated, and the two estates will join admirably, and make you one of the richest landed gentlemen in England."

"Unanswerable arguments, all. Still permit me to decline."

"And why, pray?" inquired Sir Roland, slightly raising his voice.

"My dear sir," said the young gentleman, filling with precision his glass with sherry, "I am infinitely obliged to her ladyship and you both for selecting a wife for me in this most royal and courtly fashion; but still, strange as it may appear, I have always had the vague notion that I should like to select the lady myself. It seems a little unreasonable, I allow, but then it's a whim I have."

"Stuff and nonsense! What would the boy have? If you want riches, she is the richest heiress in the kingdom; and if you want beauty you may search the three kingdoms and not see anything like her."

"I don't know about that. I have never seen her."

"You have seen her picture, then. It is all the same in Greek."

"I have looked at a picture over there in the old hall of a very pink-and-white damsel, with round blue eyes and colorless hair, and as insipid, I am near to make my affidavit, as a mug of milk and water. I don't fancy the small-beer style of young ladies; and as for her beauty—cream-candy and strawberries are very nice in their way, but nobody can live on them forever."

"Speak plain English, sir, and never mind cream-candy. Do you mean to say you refuse the hand of Miss Shirley?"

"Really, Sir Roland, you have the most point-blank way of putting questions. Does

Miss Shirley know that she is to remain, like a stationer's parcel, to be left till I call for her? Or, if that is not plain enough English, is she a party to this affair?"

"She knows nothing about it; but it will be made known to her as soon as you arrive in London."

"And do you suppose, sir, that she, a beauty, an heiress, a belle, moving in the first circles, with all the best men of the day at her feet, will consent to be made a puppet of, and jump into my arms the moment I open them? The day has passed for such things, sir, and English girls are too spunky to be traded like Eastern slaves."

"She is no English girl. She is French by birth and education; French to the core of her heart; and, being French, she is too well used to this style of thing to dream for a moment of opposing the will of her guardians. The girl is what you are not—as obedient as if trained in a military school. A girl with such French notions as she has would almost marry a live kangaroo, if her friends desired it."

"And that in itself is another objection. Miss Shirley, as you say, is French. So was her mother. Would you have a Cliffe marry the daughter of a French actress?"

"I'll break your head with this decanter if you insinuate such a thing again!" said Sir Roland, furiously; for there was still a tender spot in his heart sacred to the memory of Vivian.

"Miss Shirley is altogether too good for such a worthless scapgrace as yourself. And I vow, sir, I have half a mind to disinheritor you and make Tom Shirley my heir. He would marry her the moment he was asked, without the least objection."

Leicester laughed at the threat.

"I do not doubt it in the least, sir. But you and Lady Agnes are the most ardent conspirators ever I heard of. Now, when you wanted us to unite our fortunes, your plan was to have brought us together in some romantic and unusual way, and warned us, under the most frightful penalties, not to dream of ever being anything but acquaintances. The consequence would have been a severe attack of the grand passion, and an elopement in a fortnight. I compliment you, sir, by saying that you have no more art than if you were five instead of fifty years old."

"We don't want to be artful. The matter is to be arranged in the most plain and straightforward manner—nothing deceitful or underhand about it. If you choose to marry Miss Shirley, and gratify the dearest wish of my heart, I shall be grateful and happy all my life; if you prefer declining well and good. Vic will get a better man, and I shall know how to treat my dutiful stepson."

"Is that meant for a threat, Sir Roland?"

"You may construe it in any way you choose, Mr. Leicester Cliffe, but I certainly have counted without hesitation on your consent in this matter for the last six years."

"But, my dear sir, don't talk as if the affair all rested with me. Miss Shirley may be the first to decline."

"I tell you she will do nothing of the sort. Miss Shirley will obey her natural guardians, and marry you any moment you ask her."

"A most dignified position, for the young lady," said Leicester, with a slight shrug and smile, as he proceeded with solicitude to light his cigar. "Of course, her father knows all about this."

"Her father knows nothing of it as yet. He is one of those men who set their faces against anything like coercion, and who would not have his daughter's wishes forced in the slightest degree."

"I admire his good sense. And suppose I consent to this step, when shall I start for London?"

"To-morrow morning, in the first train. There is no time to be lost, if you wish to arrive for the ball."

"And the first thing I have to do upon getting there, I suppose, is, to step up to the young lady, hat in hand, and say: 'Miss Shirley, your grandfather and my father have agreed that we should marry. I don't care a snap for you, but at their express command I have come here to make you my wife.' How do you like the style of that, sir?"

"You may propose anyway you please, so that you do it. She is a sensible girl, and will understand it. You will go, then?"

"Here, Loup!" said the young man, holding out a bunch of grapes to his dog, by way of answer; "get down off that velvet ottoman directly. What do you suppose our worthy housekeeper will say, when she finds the tracks of your dirty paws on its whiteness?"

"I knew all along you would go," said Sir Roland, filling his glass. "Here's her health in old port, and success to you both! The only astonishing thing is, how you could have remained here so long. When you got here first, two weeks ago, you told me before you had been five minutes in the house that you would die of ennui, stay here a week; but two of them have passed now, and here you are, a permanent fixture, and not a word of ennui. To be sure there are amusements, you can go out shooting every morning, and return every evening empty-handed; you can go out sailing, there are plenty of boats in Lower Cliffe, and there are plenty agreeable fishermen, too, with handsome daughters."

It might have been the reflection of the curtains—the young gentleman was standing by the window smoking, and contemplating the scenery; but his face turned crimson.

"There is one particularly," went on Sir Roland, dryly. "Black is the man, I think—very fine fellow, I have no doubt, with a tall, dark-haired daughter. Barbara is a nice little girl, always was, and will teach you to row and catch lobsters to perfection, very likely; but still Mr. Leicester Cliffe has other duties to fulfill in life besides those two. Take care, my dear boy, and when you reach London, don't talk too much of the fisherman's girl to the heiress of Castle Cliffe."

The young man had been standing with his foot on the window-sill during this harangue; now he stepped out on the lawn.

"I will go to London to-morrow, sir," he said, quietly; and was hid from view by the screening curtains.

(To be continued—commenced in No. 269.)

The Terrible Truth:

OR,
THE THORNHURST MYSTERY.

BY MRS. JENNIE DAVIS BURTON,
AUTHOR OF "STRANGELY WED," "THE FALSE WIDOW," "ADRIA, THE ADOPTED," "CORAL AND RUBY," ETC., ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER XXVII.
THE TURNING OF THE SCALE.

NORA came down to breakfast next morning, pallid and with purple shades under her eyes, traces of a sleepless, restless night.

"I am half-convinced that Dare is right," thought Mr. Grahame from his place, as he

glanced at her. "Solitude and fifteen hours' fasting have a great effect in subduing the willful spirit. She evidently sees that we mean all we say, and wisely concludes not to make idle resistance."

The merchant sunk into a more complacent frame of mind after that. The very quietude which lulled his apprehension was indicative of anything but the submissive spirit to which he ascribed it. It was a very silent meal, a very dull morning which followed it. Nora retired to her own room again, and Mr. Grahame yawned and dozed through a long three hours. Without the chill and clouds of the last three days had resolved into a slow drizzle, and the first falling leaves from the elms were swept into wet shivering drifts here and there on the close turf of the lawn. It was not an inviting prospect as he stood in the door looking out, but the empty rooms in the great house were no more so.

"No fear of chance callers on a day like this," he reflected, as he tossed the stub of the cigar he had been smoking to the damp path. "The servants have their orders in case any one should stray this way. By Jove! little wonder that Nora is ready to give in. I'll walk across and see what Dare is doing with himself."

His overcoat was on the rack, an umbrella near at hand, and Mr. Grahame well used to all weathers. Three minutes afterward he was taking the path across the fields, the only moving creature to be seen in the whole drizzling, sodden landscape. Nora caught a glimpse of him from her window, and pressed her face against the glass watching him disappear within the cedar-grove, thinking intently for a moment. There were two of them; they were strong and she was weak; Dare she knew would hesitate at nothing to carry his point, and while her guardian would surely not dare resort to the extremity they had declared the previous night, she would be subjected to like indignities and persecutions while they remained. She was alone there, but would she be any less alone anywhere else, back in the city, for instance, or any the less in their power? Mrs. Grahame was most probably up among the lakes of Central New York now, and to what one of her fashionable, propriety-serving acquaintances could she appeal from the control of the guardian. Surely the thought which had come like a wild impulse into her head of flying from them back to the city was not one to be feebly carried out.

She dismissed it and was turning away when a second moving object caught her eye. This time it was a carriage, one of the shabby vehicles belonging to the village, dashing through the gaies and up the drive to the front of the building. A summons echoed through the quiet house, a moment later. There was a little delay, and Nora went out to the head of the stairs; with but a faint hope that this arrival might change her own situation here for the better. It was more apt to prove an humble visitor for the housekeeper than one of her own class.

"Can't 'elp hit," the footman was saying, as he blocked the entrance with his form. My border was to let nobody in, and him not going to breakfast. Wouldn't do hit for Queen Victoria 'erself, with his instructions." Something of the cockney had been brought over with this importation from Old England, and a full complement of John Bull obstinacy was planted under that stolid exterior.

"My fare's come all the way from New York to see the young lady that's stayin' here," said a rough, expostulating voice without. "Come now; lend a hand here and help get the lady in."

"There hain't no young lady 'ere," declared the man at the door, with a *saug froid* which astonished his listener.

"Oh, come now, that won't go down! Haven't I seen her myself a couple of times on the road?"

"Can't 'elp hit. My horders was to say has there's no young lady 'ere to anyone."

"Stand aside, Hamlin!" said Nora's authoritative voice at his back. "What do you mean by denying admittance to any guest?"

"Hit's my horders, Miss, 'n' pain hot being discharged. Begging your pardon, Miss, nobody can't come in hall the same."

"At least your orders cannot prevent me from going out. Stand aside at once."

Hamlin obeyed, unwillingly, and Nora ran down the steps to the waiting carriage. Within sat Mrs. Sholto Norton Hayes, the picture of virtuous indignation, not inclined to unbend after this slight put upon her.

"My dear Mrs. Hayes, this is some ridiculous mistake," said Nora, for once heartily rejoiced at sight of her rival of old. "Don't mind it, please, and do get out at once."

"Thanks; I have altered my purpose," answered the lady, frigidly. "I shall return to the village. Are you aware that it rains, and that I have an exceedingly imprudent measure for a young lady in your delicate health to be out in it?"

"But I am not in delicate health, Mrs. Hayes. I thought you knew how preposterously healthy I always am. Do, for my sake, overlook the servant's stupid blunder."

"Who ordered him to keep me out?" asked Mrs. Hayes, aggrievedly. "Really, Nora, I do not understand your course at all. Why did you leave word for Sir Rupert Archer that you were off on a late trip to the lakes on account of impaired health?"

"I never left such word."

"I heard Lisa Grahame herself tell him so. And Vane—dear me, Nora! after the way you have stood for Vane I should not suppose you would be so callous to his fate now."

Nora's heart gave a great bound, for a moment her breath and her words refused to come.

"What of Vane?" she asked, when she could speak, breathlessly. "Have you heard of him?"

"All the country is hearing of him," vouchsafed Mrs. Hayes, still stiffly. "Do you never read the papers that you don't know he is under arrest? He was taken three days ago, immediately after landing, and brought on to Pittsburg the day following. There's just one chance for him, people say, and that is to prove an *alibi*. I'm sure I hope he may."

Nora's heart was standing still now. The earth and heaven seemed to meet and mingle for one dizzy confused moment. A rush of comprehension also came. She had been purposely kept in ignorance of this, and Vane's return had fixed the league between her guardian and Owen Dare.

"I never heard of it," she said, in low, intense tones. "Mrs. Hayes, you will not refuse to come in when I tell you so and that I need you here."

That white, wistful face was not to be resisted. Mrs. Hayes, with her injured dignity in a measure appeased, consented to alight at last. The uncompromising warder of the door had retired minutes before in disgust, and the way was free.

"I don't know what you mean by needing me, my dear," she said, more graciously. "If you really need any one why not send a mes-

sage to Sholto? He came on with me to be present at the hearing which occurs to-day. This driver has proved himself a most accommodating person, and we can safely trust him to send a dispatch."

For once in her life at least Mrs. Hayes had made a sensible suggestion, and one which Nora put into immediate execution. She wrote the message hurriedly in the other's name, and herself gave it in charge to the good-natured waiting driver, who declined the gratuity she would have pressed upon him.

"Bless you, no, Miss, not for a trifle like that. I've had my fare, and it's a pleasure to do for them that were ever anything to Colonel Vivian. The old colonel were a good friend to poor folk about always."

"And now," said Mrs. Hayes, as the two were seated together, a little later, in the one open parlor, "what is the mystery of your being here, Nora? I discovered the fact by the merest accident. I thought with all the rest that you were up among the lakes, but a chance letter from Ida Vandivere mentioned your odd taste in coming along to Thornhurst. If you had to come why wasn't Lisa Grahame along instead of going back to town?"

"It was Mrs. Grahame who was to take the trip to the lakes. I came here at my guardian's suggestion. There, Mrs. Hayes, I was inclined to make you only half a confidante, but I repeat already and tell you the whole story."

She told it briefly, a new anxiety of more weight than any previous uneasiness she had entertained for herself upon her. Mrs. Hayes, who had never quite forgiven Owen Dare, was willing enough to remain now and by her presence baffle his plans.

"Such unparalleled effrontery!" she ejaculated. "With Sir Rupert Archer and a half-score of other friends only twenty miles away, to think they should have you hidden here and absolutely make the attempt to force you into a marriage against your own will—it is out of all precedent! It is only natural that you do not wish the matter made public talk, and I shall respect your request by not mentioning it even to Sholto. How fortunate we sent for him, since he is the other trustee, and will see that you have your own way regarding Thornhurst."

It proved a long hour of mutual explanations between the two. Nora heard for the first of her own unexpected fortune, of the rumors of Vane's success in the diamond fields, of popular sympathy turned suddenly in his favor.

"Half the people are confident that he will turn out innocent at last," concluded the lady. "Some say that he can prove an *alibi* at the very start, and so escape a trial. I am sure I hope so. Think what a terrible disgrace it would be to have a crime like that attach to the old Vivian name!"

Two hours after he had sauntered out alone, Mr. Grahame returned arm-in-arm with Dare. The two stopped, transfixed, upon the threshold—transfixed at sight of Mrs. Sholto Norton Hayes reclining in a great purple velvet chair before the fire, greeting them with her most languid, softest words and smiles.

Nora rose up, a bright flush in her cheeks, a little triumphant thrill in her voice, which came there in this supreme moment of her own victory over the machinations against her as she noted the blank, baffled expression sweep over Dare's face.

"Mrs. Hayes has kindly brought me the news which you gentlemen withheld," she said. "In return, I had the pleasure of confiding to her all of yesterday's incidents, and at my request she has consented to remain at Thornhurst for an indefinite time. Mr. Hayes, in Pittsburg now, may be expected by the evening train. I think I may depend upon his assistance in carrying out my intention when I come of age, without fear of the private lunatic asylum of which Mr. Dare made mention last night."

Dare, with a look of baffled malignity, impatient of harm as was his own dark will now, turned on his heel and strode out of the house without a word.

"Whether you absolutely meant all you said, or merely endeavored to frighten me into compliance with your will," Nora continued, addressing her guardian, "I do not ask. You never would have succeeded in either case. It rests with you whether the affair shall ever come to public knowledge. I am willing to let matters rest as they were for the few weeks I shall still remain under your guardianship, Mr. Grahame, provided you do not attempt again to influence my inclination."

Mr. Grahame drew a breath of absolute relief.

"It shall be as you say, Nora. Of myself I never would have attempted to influence you. I never really favored the scheme, but I was bound to support Dare in all reasonable measure. Of course I would not have sanctioned his going to the extremes proposed."

Nora was willing to accept the assurance, and peace was established again in Thornhurst. Sholto Norton Hayes, in company with two other gentlemen, arrived by the 6:30 express. The Thornhurst carriage met them, and they were whirled up through the dripping avenue and set down before the lighted front in the murky dusk of the chill autumn evening. Already Thornhurst mansion had thrown off the cloud of dreaminess which had encompassed it. The long parlors were unclosed, the furniture divested of the canvas coverings, cheery fires upon the hearths, and lights penetrating all the corners.

Nora had been hopeful, feverishly expectant, during the afternoon. With the feet of the comers on the very threshold, a shivering dread came over her, at once an intense desire to know the result urging her forward, a terrible fear of the worst holding her back. Mrs. Hayes was in her own chamber, dressing for dinner. The fate of the world might have hung on a thread, but Mrs. Sholto Hayes would not have been shaken from her observances of long habit—Gabriel might have sounded his trumpet almost any day after six with the certainty of finding her ready for eternity in full toilet. On this occasion the excitement attending her arrival and the absence of her maid had shaken her weak nerves and prolonged the task of dressing by a good hour. Nora stood alone in the center of the rooms, listening to her guardian's greeting of the guests and the sounds of their steps passing up the stairway to the apartments designed for them. The long half-hour of suspense seemed intolerable in prospect. She was not to be kept in suspense, however. The door swung back, and Sir Rupert Archer, still in traveling wraps, had her hand in his in another moment.

"I knew how anxious you would be to know the result of the hearing to-day, and I thought you would rather have it from friendly lips." His grave face crushed her last hope.

"Vane has not been cleared!"

"He is committed for trial. Don't let it alarm you. He had no hope of escaping a trial himself, and he has the general sym-

thy. He is innocent, and he will be proved so."

"Mrs. Hayes said that everything depended upon his proving an *alibi*. Can he do it?"

"He believes it. I will tell you the truth, Miss Carteret. Everything depends upon finding Miss Montrose. She is the one living being by whom he can be cleared, and no one knows her whereabouts. She must be found. The trial comes off in January, and the intervening time shall be devoted to the search."

"Will it be so difficult? They went to the South, I remember—Miss Montrose and her father?"

"They left there two months afterward. I passed through the vicinity and made inquiry, but could gain no information of them further. I can do Vane no good here, and I shall leave for the South again in a couple of days. Be sure that no effort shall be spared—they must be found."

Nora was by far more sanguine of the result than was the baronet. She could not know how thorough his inquiry had been, how complete the mystery of their sudden disappearance. Womanlike, her reasoning went little further than that Vane would be cleared because he was innocent.

His other staunch friend, Prescott, was presented by her guardian when the dinner-bell called the party below, and during the evening found occasion to explain to her the full particulars of the trust he held.

Morning saw the gentlemen disperse again. A telegram brought Mrs. Grahame down to Thornhurst two days later. Mrs. Hayes remained, and the household fell into the dull routine under which anxiety and sympathy were powerful elements.

It was wonderful how the rumor of Vane's success abroad changed popular opinion. A stream of visitors among his old acquaintances flowed in upon him in his prison-room; a pile of dainty, sympathetic notes were of daily occurrence. The ladies from Thornhurst were among the first, and Nora, saying little while there, carried back the image of her hero, changed from the dark, handsome boy, reckless and thoughtless, to the man matured, no less handsome, and a reformed character who, in even his present painful position, was taking the whole circle which had been loud in denouncing him by storm.

CHAPTER XXVIII. IN THE COURT-ROOM.

Weeks went by. October blazed through at Thornhurst. The yellow and crimson leaves turned brown, and then the tress held up their bare branches to a gray November sky, and the first snow fell upon them and wrapped the lawn and the hillside in a pure white sheet. At last December was wearing fast away. The coming trial was in everybody's mouth now. It was well known that the best counsel had been secured. The preliminary hearing had turned upon the verdict of the coroner's jury three years before, and the witnesses summoned were almost identical with those examined then.

Meantime Sir Rupert Archer had been following blind chases in his own personal search. First he had inserted advertisements in the leading papers of America and London. He had carefully gone over the ground he had traversed once before in his own personal interest, but now a life was at stake, he would not neglect even the most improbable chances, thus proving a friendship stronger than love. The old ruin in Georgia had been leveled to the ground. A few among the elder planters remembered the morose man who had once lived in their midst, but no one knew from whence he had come or where he had gone. One or two cognizant of his return there for a few brief weeks, three years previous, had imbibed an idea that he had gone to some one of the gold-producing localities of the world, one suggesting California, another Australia. Still another imagined that, instead of seeking a fortune, Mr. Montrose had had a fortune left him. Only one thing was evident beyond doubt: that they had quitted the vicinity unexpectedly to even themselves. The cottage had been taken until June, and father and daughter had left hurriedly in the early stormy days of March.

In addition to the advertisements already afloat, Sir Rupert immediately opened communications with suitable parties in the various points where Mr. Montrose might, with any reasonable probability, have resorted. The cable to Australia was not complete, but the baronet forwarded letters to the colony, although there was no chance of a reply before the trial, and the desperate earnestness with which he prosecuted the search in all directions was better proof than any words of how hopeless he felt his friend's case should Venetia Montrose not be found. Vane's counsel also had prosecuted that, and a fortune left him. How the days sped! how the brief interval grew briefer! how hope waned and anxiety grew as the short winter days merged one into another, and the holidays were at hand! There were no rejoicings at Thornhurst now. One anxious heart was growing faint with hope deferred. Nora's twenty-first birthday was past, and the papers which restored every penny of Colonel Vivian's fortune to his son lay in the lawyer's hands.

The twenty-fourth day of December broke—a bright, cloudless winter day, with a crisp snow under foot, and a keen, bracing air which sent new life into languid pulses. Mr. Grahame, who for past weeks had been devoting himself strictly to his business, had come down to Thornhurst on the previous day. The two months' extension obtained through Dare had brought him all he hoped; his difficulties were lifted, his liabilities met, and he was prepared to endure the holidays in the quiet country-house in the complacent matrimony with which he tolerated relaxation from business cares. Dare had kept himself scrupulously out of the way since his own plans had come to naught. There had been one or two private interviews between him and the counsel for the prosecution, who prided himself upon working up the neatest case of the whole year, and it was whispered that certain important points in his possession had been ferreted out by the acute lawyer. He had not once been near Vane in his prison.

Sholto Norton Hayes made one of the party at Thornhurst, and on the morning of the twenty-fourth Sir Rupert Archer joined them, just returned from a fruitless trip to the Far West, where he had pursued a W. Montrose, who, like a will-o'-the-wisp, was always before him, and who, cornered at last, proved the wrong man. He put his own anxiety out of sight for the time, but he was apparently cheerful as all might, this reunion was a weight upon all as a reminder of a far-different Christmas-time three years before.

The baronet was in time to join the party at the breakfast-table.

"I have the morning papers along with me," he remarked, as they lingered over the meal. "Hamlin can find them in my overcoat-pocket, if you gentlemen are interested in the news."

Mr. Grahame, whose morning paper was essential to his comfort as his morning coffee, sent the man after them immediately.

"This is something out of my line," the merchant said, laying one aside. "You ladies will probably not despise it. The *Dispatch* or the *Commercial*—which will you prefer, Hayes?"

Nora took up the discarded sheet indifferently.

"A *Court Journal*," said the baronet, glancing across. "You are sure to find it extremely interesting, Miss Carteret. I am positive I received no English papers yesterday, and until then that overcoat has not been in use for the greater part of a year. That particular *Court Journal* must have arrived at a rather venerable age."

Old though it might be, something had caught Nora's careless eye. She read the lengthy paragraph through, her hand trembled, and her glance, eager and intense, went across to the baronet. Then her eyes fell and she trifled with the contents of her plate, but not a morsel after that passed her lips.

Half an hour after she went into the library where Sir Rupert had strayed alone, the paper in her hands, her voice quivering in her eagerness.

"We have been so often disappointed, I could not bear to say anything before the rest. Sir Rupert, is it possible that this can be our Miss Montrose? It seems incredible, but Mr. Walter Montrose was an Englishman, and who knows? Stranger things might have happened."

He glanced at the article she pointed out, and uttered a slight ejaculation.

It was a description of the presentation at court of the Lady Venetia Montrose, daughter of the new Earl of Cleveland, the bright, particular star who would not fail to electrify London society during the coming season.

"It is possible! I can almost hope we have really discovered them at last, now that I recall the very striking resemblance which existed between the old Earl of Cleveland and Mr. Walter Montrose. I mentioned it to his daughter once, but she ignored the relationship. I was half-inclined for the moment to suspect, and it never occurred to me later, to identify him in the successor to the earldom. I have hopes, but for fear of still another disappointment, let us keep this, which may be no more than a coincidence, to ourselves. I will send a cable dispatch the moment I return to town, to be delivered through my London lawyer for the sake of certainty."

The baronet returned to the city early of the same afternoon, accompanied by Nora and Sholto Hayes, whose mission was to call upon the prisoner.

Vane was neither indifferent nor insensible to his danger. His own great grief for his father had not left him incapable of comprehending how the dark appearance standing against him might be made to tell. He knew how vain the search after the one person who could clear him had proved; there was only one hope left, that some break might occur in the chain of circumstantial evidence so woven about him.

He was looking the worse for more than two months passed in prison, but his steady nerve and high courage had not failed him once. It was the last time Nora would see him before the trial, still three weeks in advance. It was too painful to see him often in his captivity, and a self-reproach, which need have held no place in her mind, stirred her to the bitterest pain.

All unwittingly, she had come between father and son. Vane had been bitter against her once; little wonder if he had hated her; he did her fuller justice now; he had protested against her intention as made known to him, but without altering her purpose.

Sholto Hayes, never very clever, invariably experienced an uncomfortably stifling sensation when he found himself within that narrow, bare prison-room, and lost whatever of tact he might ordinarily possess. He stood staring out of the little barred window while Nora concluded her interview with the prisoner.

She had never harassed him with signs of weakness in her occasional visits, with tears or lamentations, as the few other ladies who had called upon him invariably made it a habit to do. She came in the hope of bringing him a little comfort, to show how firm was her own faith in him, not to depress.

"There is one thing more I wish you to know—what I came to tell you to-day: Thornhurst is really yours now, as it should have been from the first. No; please don't pain me by any remembrance, or by thanks I do not deserve."

"You have insisted on that, Nora! Promise me one thing, at least: that you will not refuse it, should I never have occasion to return. I should like to be sure Thornhurst was left in loving hands."

It was the first time he had referred, ever so remotely to the worst termination which might come of the trial. She shrank with a sickening rush of intense emotion, and put up her hands as though she would have waved the dread away.

"Don't, Vane! Oh, for pity's sake, never think it may be so bad as that."

"If you will agree to this, then, to stay there until I may come to claim the place. Pray for the time to come soon, if you will, Nora."

"You don't intend to let them hang you, I hope, Vivian," broke in Sholto Hayes, turning from his post of outlook.

"Not if I can help it," said Vane, with a smile. "It takes something more than concurrence of events such as forms the evidence to hang a man in this enlightened age."

Sir Rupert's message went, and in due time an answer from his London lawyer was returned. It was almost a greater disappointment than any one previous, since it left them still in suspense. It said:

"The Earl of Cleveland and daughter out of the country. Message will be forwarded by the earl's solicitor."

That was all—the beginning and the end of the hope which had swelled in two hearts almost to confidence—the end of it, when three more weeks rolled round, and the day of trial came.

The place was crowded on that fifteenth day of January, when the prisoner was led into the court-room. He was a trifle worn. Three months of confinement had paled the bronze which was the result of as many years' exposure. On the whole, the assembly was disappointed that he was not looking worse. The people were there, some through sympathy, by far the greater part through a morbid curiosity, to personally witness the great sensation of the day. Vane, a little pale, but perfectly collected, glanced over the sea of faces greeting him, bowed to his friends, and took his place.

Mr. Blakewell, for the prosecution, opened the case. This trial was, he was thankful to say, something unusual in the annals of the criminal court. Our young men were too wild and reckless as a class; too many of them were building up a record unworthy of their names—such a record as two years of the prisoner's

life, which should be briefly reviewed there, would present. Crime was increasing with a frightful rapidity, not among the lower strata of humanity, the scum of the earth, but in the young generation springing up about us, those of our own blood, whose hopes were as our hopes, whose lives as our lives. But, thank Heaven! it was seldom that the black brand of the partridge fell on our young men of promise. Justice was proving itself too lax in its dealings with deeply-dyed criminals. There was much dissatisfaction in the Eastern courts at that present time over delays, and reprieves, and pardons, where prompt execution would have been no more than retributive justice, and a host of following crimes would have been prevented thereby. This state of things was all wrong; there must be a limit to it found; there must be a striking example made to shock that reckless portion of the world back to its senses again. What better opportunity for the double purpose than this? Then followed the promised review of the prisoner's life—his wild course while abroad, his further mad folly after his return. Much had been known to the public then; more remained to be unfolded now.

The witnesses summoned were for the most part those who had testified at the inquest. Nora was not spared this cruel trial. She gave her testimony as she had given it before, collectedly, but with a horrible despair of knowing that her words were adding to the probability that would sign his death-warrant. Sir Rupert Archer, Mr. Frederick Jones, and many others, gave their evidence as before.

Owen Dare called and repeated his previous deposition. He had strolled out he had followed the female form fancying something suspicious in her manner, had recognized the two as they met beneath the elms and turned away. Had smoked a cigar in the shrubbery before returning to the veranda, meantime had seen a man drive up to the door, alight and gain admittance. Voices in the library checked him as he was about to enter. The words were audible, and unintentionally he overheard a fragment of conversation between Colonel Vivian and his visitor. Heard the latter announce himself as a bank messenger and ask if a signature he appeared to display was genuine. Heard the colonel declare it a forgery. Another signature apparently displayed by the visitor also pronounced a forgery. Heard the man declare the checks had been taken as payment for Vane Vivian's debts, and suggest that the colonel should acknowledge one which had been realized upon, in which case the bank would take no measures to discover the criminal party, and the person presenting the check could better afford to lose the amount than meddle with the law. Had stood chained by surprise during the brief space this had passed, but recovering himself had walked quietly away and gone in by a different entrance.

Heard Young, bank messenger, swear: Verified the evidence of Mr. Dare as related to his interview with Colonel Vivian. The colonel had consented to admit one of the signatures, the other false check which had not been realized upon was destroyed. The bank had never taken any steps to discover the forger. It was not probable the prisoner supposed his father aware of the forgery. Had had no acquaintance with the accused. Had seen him once. The occasion was after midnight, in the first hour of New Year's Day, 1870. He had then come rushing in past Thorahurst station and sprung to a car-platform after the train was in motion. Had never known the rash passenger was Vane Vivian until recognizing him in the prisoner at the bar.

Mr. Young was permitted to stand down. A question of time was instituted. The counsel for the defense claimed that the distance from Thornhurst mansion could not have been traversed on foot in the twelve minutes difference between city and railway time. The prosecution demanded evidence that the train was strictly on time that night. Even express trains in our country, and especially at that season, are not always infallible models of punctuality. The judge overruled the point. There were many different degrees of swiftness, and desperation would naturally lead speed to a man's feet. A few moments of time could not stand against the evidence produced, the ill-terms between father and son, the acknowledged reckless character of the latter, the finding of the pistol identified as his, the motives developed prompting the deed, and the fight so artfully planned, so successfully carried out.

Mr. Prescott testified to the prisoner's character being most exemplary during two years he had known him; his (Prescott's) firm belief that the other had never learned of his father's decease until his arrest for the crime after arriving in New York.

All the proof was dead against the accused. The evidence summed up overwhelmingly. Popular opinion, fickle as it is enthusiastic, turned again. In vain the counsel for the accused spoke eloquently of his reform, of his noble efforts to redeem himself during later years, fed on the hope of gaining a noble father's forgiveness for follies of the past. The learned counsel was drawing to the close of his appeal, the stern faces of the listening jury never softened, the impatience of the audience was becoming apparent. A messenger, slipping with professional skill through the crowd, delivered a note into the counsel's hand.

The latter glanced at it, flashed a look over the crowded court, and went on with his speech. He referred to the grave mistakes arising through trusting too utterly to circumstantial evidence. For instance, the prosecution just now had built up an exceedingly neat and apparently incontrovertible case. He proposed showing the fallacy of all which had been made to appear so plain, and in doing so would call an important witness at that moment conducted into court.

"Lady Venetia Montrose!"

The sound of that name went like an electric thrill through the heart of the prisoner and his friends.

(To be continued—commenced in No. 262.)

Overland Kit:
OR,
THE IDYL OF WHITE PINE.
BY ALBERT W. AIKEN,
AUTHOR OF "WITCHES OF NEW YORK," "WOLF
DEMON," "WHITE WITCH," ETC.

CHAPTER XXIX.
KIT "CHIPS" IN.

JOE RAIN, standing in the center of the little road that ran northward by the side of the Reese, trembled.

At what?

Around him the pines surged fitfully in the breeze that swept ever downward from the great rocky peaks of the Sierra. The tall walls of the canyon went straight upward, like a structure built by human hands, toward the heavens. And from the sky the

full round moon shone down, though every now and then a sullen cloud passed over and hid the light of the vestal orb, as if the dark-hued courier of the sky, sailing upon the bosom of the air, was jealous of the silver sheen.

Rain, the desperado, the man upon whose soul lay the weight of a hundred crimes—whose life from boyhood had been but one long record of wrong—trembled, standing alone in that mountain canyon, at a sound that the pure night-air had brought to his ears.

With every sense intent on the watch, he stood like a statue in the road. His hand clutched convulsively the handle of a revolver in his belt, for the desperado was well armed. Two six-shooters were buckled at his waist, and the blade of a broad, keen-edged bowie-knife, thrust through his belt, gleamed silver in the moonlight.

"Cuss my darned coward heart!" he muttered, as he glared with watchful eyes around: "is a tree a-rustin' in the wind-a-goin' to make me shiver and shake? But is it a tree? No pine that grows in this hyer gully ever made that noise. It's somebody a-trackin' me, Injun fashion. Kin it be a red-skin a-goin' fur my top-knot, or is it—?" and he paused; a nervous shiver supplied the place of words. The desperado had not trembled at the first thought; the Indian warrior had less terror for him than the foe whose name he feared to speak.

Rigid as a statue for full five minutes the desperado remained. The sounds of the night and of the wilderness were around and about him. The breeze murmured through the branches of the pines and whistled softly in warning calls among the winding passages of the rocks of the canyon. The river rippled along over its stony path, and fell with a little, sullen roar over the edge of the shelving ledge into the dark pool below, where the spotted trout waited for its prey. The hum and cry of the night insects rose and fell upon the air, riding upon the balsamic breeze, but no sound of human life—nothing that denoted the presence of man in the mountain canyon fell upon the ears that listened so eagerly.

"I'm a darned fool!" Rain muttered, between his teeth; "wuss skeered nor a coyote makin' tracks with an ounce ball into him. Why, I believe that a goopher comin' out of his hole would make me run. I'll go on ag'in."

Joe thrust the half-drawn revolver back into its pouch, and proceeded on his way. Not ten steps did he take, when again he halted, a muttered curse on his lips. His listening ears had again caught the sound that he so feared to hear. But this time, instead of being behind him, following in his track, it was beyond him, toward the north.

The darned critter has circled round me far to head me off," Joe muttered, drawing the revolver from his belt. "All I ask is a fair shake; I ain't afraid." But the bloodless lips and quivering hand of the desperado proved that he did not speak the truth. A deadly terror was on his soul—a terror that unnerved his sinews and made his head sag with doubt.

Again Joe heard the slight sound. It was only some hundred paces ahead of him, and came apparently from a little clump of pines that grew close to the road.

Joe dropped upon his knees behind a huge boulder. Carefully he drew back the hammer of the revolver. The sharp click of the lock rang out shrilly on the clear mountain air.

With an anxious face and a beating heart, the desperado clutched the weapon. The moonbeams danced in wavy lines of light along the surface of the shining barrel.

Then from the covert of the pines, into the center of the road, came the thing that had produced the noise that had so alarmed Rain.

"A jackass rabbit, by thunder!" the desperado exclaimed.

And so it was. The harmless little animal balked in the road, sat up on its haunches and looked around.

Joe could not repress a burst of laughter. Alarmed at the noise, the rabbit scampered into the shelter of the bushes again.

"Ha, ha, ha!" Joe roared, rising to his feet.

"Ha, ha!" rang out an answering laugh upon the night air, so natural, so unlike a man's laugh, and so unlike an echo, that Joe again started in afright.

"What a darned fool I am," he muttered in anger, recovering from his alarm. "Fust I'm skeered to death by a jackass rabbit, and then I jump like a hit antelope at the echo of my own voice. If I ain't got more pluck than this I'd better sell out."

Then again Joe proceeded onward. He followed the road through the canyon. After it left the shelter of the defile, it turned suddenly to the right, followed always the course of the stream, and passed across a little rocky plain.

Half way across the plain Joe stopped. Again he had heard the stealthy footsteps following upon his trail.

The outlaw turned pale, and great drops of sweat came out on his bronzed forehead.

With a resolute effort he turned and faced in the direction of the noise.

"Darn the thing, whatever it is!" he cried. "I might as well be killed outright as skeered half to death this way."

The moment the desperado stopped the sound of the footsteps stopped also. Joe listened, but no sound, save the noise of the night insects, the rustle of the breeze, and the ripple and swash of the waters, came to his ear.

"Kin it be an echo of my own footsteps?" he muttered, in doubt. "Darned if it ain't more like a ghost following me than a man. My blood feels like ice," and Joe shivered as he spoke. He had again drawn his revolver from his pocket, and with it ready crouched in his hand, he stood with a gloomy frown upon his rough features.

He was in the center of the little glade within easy revolver range of the pines that hid the entrance to the canyon.

"You darned skulkin' thief, come out an' face me if you dare!" Joe said, defiantly. It cost him an effort, though, to utter the defiance. His voice sounded hard and unnatural, even to his own ears.

Before the echoes from the Sierra's side had given back the bold defiance of the outlaw, two forms stood within the rocky plain, lit by the moonbeams. One, the desperado Joe Rain, standing in his center, his bronzed face white with terror, and his heart chilled by the cold fingers of black despair; the other, on the very edge of the plain, risen like a specter from amid the pines at the canyon's mouth, was the road-agent, Overland Kit. His face was covered by a mask, as usual, a six-shooter in his hand, leveled with a deadly aim at the person of Joe Rain.

A howl of despair came from the lips of the desperado when he beheld the well-known figure of his former leader step from the dark cover of the pines.

A moment the two surveyed each other, their revolvers leveled at each other's breast; death in their hands, death in their hearts.

"Overland Kit, by blazes!" exclaimed Joe, in a tone that plainly betrayed that both rage and despair were blended in his heart.

"Treacherous villain!" said the road-agent, in a stern, deep voice, "are you prepared to die?"

"To die?" growled Joe, a fierce light shining in his evil eyes.

"Yes; to die the death that all traitors should die."

"What have I done to you?"

"Cowardly hound!" exclaimed the road-agent, in contempt. "You ask that question even when you are flying, like a thief in the night, from my vengeance. Every time that you have paused to listen for the sound of my footsteps tracking you through the canyon, your guilty conscience has whispered my name in your ear; and told you that I was on your track, and that my mission was one of vengeance. Not a half a mile from this spot I watched you kill Jimmy Mullen. Like a coward, you struck him in the back, then robbed him of his wealth. I did not think that that heaven had destined me to avenge that deed. From my covert in the rocks I watched you depart without making any effort to stay you. I would not be both your judge and your executioner, although I knew you to be a red-handed murderer. Then you went straight to Spur City, eager for more blood-money. Had your eyes been as keen to penetrate my disguise as your hand was quick to strike Mullen in the back, I should have swung from a pine tree. But, your time's up; the game is over, 'pass in your checks.'"

"We are man to man hyer; you're no better than I am!" cried Joe, fiercely. "I am armed, an' I'll play my hand for all it's worth."

"You'd better 'pass,' returned Overland Kit, tersely.

"I'll see you in blazes fust," exclaimed Joe, with the courage of despair; "you jist 'chip in,' now!"

"My 'edge!' replied the road-agent.

Two puffs of flame, two whip-like cracks, and a wounded man fell on the rocks.

CHAPTER XXX.
LIP TO LIP.

WHILE the interview between Jinnie and Bernice—the particulars of which we have already related—was taking place, a skulking form, in the darkness of the entry, listened at the door of Bernice's chamber.

The two girls had spoken without caution, therefore the listener had heard every word.

When the interview came to an end, and Jinnie left the room, the eavesdropper sought concealment under the rude stairs that led to the little garret of the hotel.

The entry was quite dark, except at the head of the stairs that led up from the lower part. There a window let in the moonbeams.

With a smile on her face and joy in her heart, Jinnie walked along the entry, never guessing for a moment that listening ears had overheard all that had transpired between herself and Bernice.

When Jinnie reached the head of the stairs she heard the sound of footsteps ascending. An exclamation of joy broke from her lips. She recognized the step.

The man came up out of the darkness of the stairway into the circle of light cast by the moon through the window. It was Dick Talbot.

His face was stern and gloomy; but the expression softened as he beheld Jinnie.

"Why, Jinnie, is that you?" he said, advancing to the side of the girl.

The two stood by the window. The moonbeams streamed in full upon their faces.

"Oh, Dick, you have been in such danger," Jinnie murmured softly, gazing with an anxious look into Talbot's face.

"A pretty tight place, Jinnie," Dick answered. "Judge Jones has got a grudge against me for some reason, and he tried all he knew how to have my neck stretched. I can't understand why the Judge should bear me ill-will; but he does. There's no mistake about it. I suppose I've trod on his toes in some way."

Jinnie's face flushed for a moment, and she cast down her eyes at Dick's speech. Talbot noticed the peculiar look upon the face of the girl, and a sudden thought darted through his mind.

And while Jinnie's eyes were cast upon the floor, and Talbot's were searching her face anxiously, the dark figure that lay crouched in ambush beneath the garret stairs, watched the two with breathless earnestness.

Jinnie and Dick little guessed that anxious ears were drinking in their words, or that eyes, glaring in anger, were watching their every movement.

"Jinnie, do you know why Judge Jones hates me?" asked Talbot, suddenly.

Jinnie's face flushed crimson at the question; the little red lips quivered, and her bosom heaved tumultuously.

"You don't answer, Jinnie," Dick said, after waiting in vain for the girl's reply.

"How can I answer, Dick?" Jinnie said, slowly. "It isn't right for me to say that I know when I am only guessing."

"Then you have made a guess regarding the matter, eh?"

"Yes," answered the girl, slowly.

"What is it?"

"Oh, don't ask me, Dick!" cried Jinnie, impatiently, her face again flushing up.

Talbot looked at the flushed face of the girl for a moment, in silence, a curious expression shining in his eyes.

"Jinnie," he said, abruptly, and after quite a long pause, "I owe you two lives, for twice you have saved mine." And, as he spoke, he passed his arm gently around the waist of the girl, and drew her to his side. She did not resist, but nestled her head on his breast, and the long-drawn breath—half a sigh—that came from her lips, told of peace and contentment; she was happy.

Talbot pressed his lips softly to the low, brown forehead of the girl, Jinnie's slight form quivered for a second, like a wind-stirred leaf, as she felt the warm, moist pressure of Dick's lips.

"Twice you have risked your life for mine," he said, earnestly. "Now I think that it is about time that I should try to pay you for the services. Do you remember the time when we stood by the bank of the Reese?"

"Yes," Jinnie said, softly.

"I told you, then, that the life that you had saved belonged to you, that it was yours whenever you wanted to claim it. You haven't asked for it yet, Jinnie."

A single glance Jinnie cast into Dick's face, and then again the long, golden lashes veiled the large, clear eyes.

"You're right, Jinnie," he said, slowly. "I had forgot. I must treat you like a woman and not like a child. It is not right that you, a woman, should speak, when I, a man,

hesitate. But, Jinnie, I have not spoken before because—well, because I don't know myself; I can't tell what I am or what I think. I'm a deal like a piece of pine floating down the Reese, at the mercy of every current and eddy in the stream. One moment, I think that I am a strong, determined, self-willed fellow; and the next, I come to the conclusion that a more wavering, irresolute wretch than I don't exist on top of the earth. Jinnie, I belong to you by rights; I know that, and when I am with you I feel that I love you better than I do any other woman in the world, but, when I am away from you—" and Talbot paused, irresolute.

"You think that you don't love me?" Jinnie asked, looking up into Dick's face again with her earnest eyes.

"No, I don't think that; but, the thought comes to me that, perhaps, I don't love you well enough to make you happy," Dick replied, honestly.

"You only think so when you are away from me?"

"Yes."

"There is a very easy cure for that, then."

"What is it?" Talbot asked, in astonishment.

"You mustn't go away from me at all," the girl replied, simply.

A smile came over Dick's face at the answer.

"And so, Jinnie, if I tell you honestly and frankly, that I think I love you, but am not sure of it, and ask you to be my wife, what now will be your answer?"

"Dick, when you play cards do you always make the man you're playing against tell you how he is going to play, before you commence the game?" the girl asked, shrewdly.

"Of course not," Talbot replied, quickly.

"And yet, you wish me to tell you how I am going to answer before you put the question. I don't think that is quite fair, Dick."

"Little girl, I'm no match for you!" cried Talbot, suddenly; "there's more brains in this little head than in a dozen like mine. I haven't asked you a fair question, but now I will."

With a touch full of tenderness, he drew the light form of Jinnie still closer to him, raised up the little head with its halo of red-gold hair, until the clear gray eyes looked full into his own.

The smile upon Jinnie's face, and the joyous light dancing in her eyes, told how happy she was.

"Jinnie, you know me as Dick Talbot," he said slowly; "it is very likely that it is not my name. In other years, and in other places far away from this wild region, I may have been known by another name. Blood may be upon my hands, human blood; why, Jinnie, I may be stained by all sorts of crimes. I tell you this, so that you may not act rashly, but take plenty of time to think it over. And now, for what I was going to say at the beginning: Jinnie, I think that I love you well enough to ask you to be my wife. I ain't quite sure of it, for, as I told you before, I am like a man wandering in a dark night; I can't see my way clear; I'm willing to risk it, though, if you are; so, Jinnie, will you be my wife? Don't be in a hurry to answer, you know; take all the time you like."

"One little second—only a breath is all I want," Jinnie cried, quickly. "Yes." Firm and decided, but full of love, was that "yes."

A moment Dick looked into the clear eyes, now lustrous with the light of love; he saw the flushed cheeks and quivering scarlet lips, so rich and ripe in their dewy sweetness, and then, over his soul, like a flood sweeping all before it down the canyon's bed, came a sweet sense of joy, which told him that he did really love the girl, whose little form he pressed against his heart. Then he bent over and kissed the little, full lips that so eagerly awaited that kiss.

The soft sound of the passionate kiss that told that two human hearts had agreed to beat in loving concert till the Dark Angel sounded the call of doom, resounded gently through the darkness of the passage-way. It reached the ears of the watcher beneath the stairway.

The sound that told of loving concord, transformed him into a demon of hate. His hand closed convulsively over his revolver; death was in his heart.

(To be continued—commenced in No. 264.)

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ON THE DUNCE-BLOCK.

BY JOE JOY, JR.

Upon the dunce block! What a throne
For one whose hopes were fixed on higher;
And on my head the dunce's crown,
That burned there like a band of fire!

My great boy's heart within me died;
I tried to smile but turned all colors;
I sat there in my downcast pride
Before a hundred cruel scholars.

My future hopes, how faded they!
How did my downfall overawe me!
How painfully I rued the day;
But, worst of all, Malinda saw me!

My misdemeanor I aver
Was for her sake, my miss of misses!
The master caught me throwing her,
I thought unseemly, some long-range kisses.

Shy glancing round I caught her eye,
So roguish and devoid of pity,
A-peeping at me on the sly
Through curls that made her face so pretty.

My rival, too, saw my disgrace;
Beneath his tickled gaze I wriggled;
He made at me a mocking face,
And at his nose his fingers wiggled.

He triumphed over me, and oh,
How in my heart did I despise him!
And vow as homeward we should go
That I most sorely would chastise him.

And when at last the school was out
To punch his head I took occasion;
The boys said 'twas an awful bout,
And I got licked like all creation.

And oh, to think! The little flirt,
To fill me more with sore repentance,
With laughing words she cut my heart,
And then next day out my acquaintance!

LEAVES

From a Lawyer's Life.

BY A. GOULD PENN.

X.—The Detective Detected.

I HAD just seated myself comfortably at the breakfast-table, one morning, when my kind landlady announced that a lad at the door wished to see me.

Supposing the lad to be the bearer of some commonplace message, I went to the door to learn his errand. A bright-eyed little fellow greeted me politely, with a cheery "Good-morning, Mr. Smith."

"What's wanting, my little man?" I asked.

"Mr. Aaron Flockman, the merchant tailor, sent me to ask you to call at his store immediately."

Now, I was not one who would abandon a good breakfast, even at the request of a wealthy Jewish merchant like Aaron Flockman, so I told the boy to report that I would call in as I went down to my office, and then I went back to coffee and toast, and deliberately finished my morning meal.

"What could old Flockman be wanting?" I wondered.

He was a man who had never patronized me before; in fact, he seemed to be very successful in accumulating wealth, and in keeping out of court.

I sauntered down-town, exchanging greetings with the business people as they hurried past, when I was overtaken by a young merchant, who thrust his arm in mine as he bade me good-morning.

"Heard the news, Smith?" he asked.
"News? No. What is up now?" I asked.
"Burglary last night; old Flockman's strong-box riddled to the music of about ten thousand."

"Indeed! Any clue to the rascals?"
"Don't know; just heard of it myself," and my friend dodged into his store.

I hastened onward, and arriving at old Flockman's place of business, I found the front closed, and a group of news mongers gathered about the door.

My knock was answered, and I was admitted by a fancifully-dressed young Israelite, a clerk of the establishment.

The old merchant sat in a huge arm-chair, gazing sorrowfully at the wreck of his strong iron safe, and on my approach began a tirade in his broken English, and pointed dejectedly to the ruins, saying:

"I am a ruined man, Meester Schmit—notings now but a beggar. Ten thousand dollar of mine hard-earned monish gone—gone—"

With some effort I succeeded in getting the story from him, and saw how the burglars had gained an entrance through the strong-barred window.

"I want mine money back, Mr. Schmit; I want dot burglars taken up, shust, and I pays you vell."

Having noted carefully the surroundings, and got all the information I could, I inquired confidentially of old Aaron respecting the habits and character of his fancy clerk, and found that the old man saw no reason of suspecting him. But my first glance had convinced me that the young man had the capacity, and probably the villainous audacity, to take a hand in any such game. His very looks struck me as being peculiar, but I said no more about it.

Bidding old Aaron to keep his store strictly closed, and not to disturb anything or to admit any one without my order, I assured him that the thieves should be caught, and proceeded to the telegraph office. Here I sent a brief dispatch to my old friend Homer, the detective, and then returned to my office.

The next train brought Homer, who at once came to see me, and together we went and examined the premises of the burglary.

After finishing our inspection, Homer assured me that he knew by the signs what particular gang of professionals had done the job, and advised me as to my future course. We told Aaron to open up his store and proceed with his business, and above all to keep his tongue strictly quiet.

The day wore on and the excitement began to subside, when old Aaron Flockman came to my office, accompanied by a smart-looking young man, whom he introduced as a detective.

I listened patiently while the young stranger talked glibly of his wonderful talent, and appointed a private meeting with him at my office that night.

He came, according to promise, and we discussed the matter in all its bearings.

"Now, sir, Mr. Weston, for that was the detective's name, 'what will be your charge if you undertake this job?'"

"My dear Mr. Smith," he smiled so persuasively, "you must allow that to accomplish the job would be worth a handsome fee."

"Certainly, Mr. Weston. I understand that."

"Well, sir, I will make this proposition: for two thousand dollars I will deliver the guilty parties to the proper officers, but if I secure the money, all my price must be a little higher, you understand."

I understood and closed the bargain, and he left, seemingly highly elated.

After the door had closed upon him, I arose and turned the key, and gave a signal cough.

Detective John Homer stepped into the room from out a large, empty clothes-press that stood in one corner.

"Well, did you spot the man, Homer?" I asked.

"No, sir; he is a new bird in these parts; but I don't like his looks, and my word for it, in two days he will be back to you for a change in the programme."

"A change? how?"

"He will offer a compromise that if the gang will return so much money, they shall retain the rest, and no further steps be taken to prosecute the case."

"Then what?"

"If he does, he is my meat," confidently exclaimed Homer, and he told me how to proceed in such event.

A week elapsed, and I began to fear Homer's predictions were not to be verified, when, one day, Detective Weston entered my office, followed by the old Jew, Aaron.

"What success?" I inquired, by way of introducing the subject.

"Ah, Meester Schmit," broke in the Jew, more monish, more monish ish de cry, ant I am so poor!"

"Yes, sir," explained Weston. "I received an anonymous note from members of the gang, offering to return the spoils on a fair division, providing there will be a guarantee of no further proceedings against them."

"Have you obtained any clue to the perpetrators?" I asked Weston.

"Well, yes—a little," he answered, hesitatingly; "I have found sufficient evidence that Anson Rosser, the young man who clerks for our friend here, is one of the guilty parties."

"Then we will proceed against him," I replied, and the two left my presence.

In due time everything was arranged for the arrest of Anson Rosser, and amid his protestations of innocence, he was carried to jail.

I was fully satisfied that Rosser was concerned in the robbery, but the conduct of Detective Weston was what puzzled me, and so I resorted to his shadow, Homer, for light.

"Cute chap," said Homer; "he don't suspicion that I am on his trail. I told you he would offer a compromise."

"But, how do you account for Weston's readiness to have Anson Rosser arrested?" I demanded.

"Easy enough. I see through his plan; but

Rosser is guilty, too. Push on Rosser, and I will be on hand with the full facts in good time."

"I can't see your purpose, Homer, but if you say you can produce the evidence we will go ahead."

"I am in a fair way to get all the necessary facts. I am as sure as can be that I can lay my hands on the real criminals at a moment's notice, and can produce every dollar of the swag, too."

"You must be one of the gang!" I suggested, a little dubious at his confident manner.

"I am!" he replied, and cautiously left the office.

The time that had elapsed since the robbery had somewhat dulled public curiosity. No one knew that I had employed Detective Homer, excepting Aaron, the Jew, and my partner, Ayres.

Hence the day of trial came on, and the case made no unusual stir. Anson Rosser was duly arraigned, and expert counsel assigned him by the court, while Ayres and myself were employed by Aaron Flockman to assist in the prosecution.

The prisoner maintained a reserve, and showed no disposition to confess. The shrewdest questioning failed to get any admission from him.

A motley jury was impaneled—composed of men of many different occupations, and one strange feature struck me, that several of the jurors were entire strangers to me, nor could I get any information concerning them.

Homer was not to be seen, but a note from him, conveyed to me by some mysterious means, cautioned us to take no exceptions to the jury, so on this faith we accepted them.

Detective Weston was called: stated his occupation, etc., answering with apparent readiness the usual preparatory questions.

"Mr. Weston, state to the court and jury what you have discovered in relation to this burglary."

His story was in brief, that he had carefully examined the surroundings and had become convinced that some party familiar with the inside of the store must have planned and executed the burglary. Acting on this opinion, and also on the fact that he had found in one corner of the ruined safe a small piece of a gold finger-ring on which was engraved the letter B, he had traced the clue, and among the effects of the prisoner had found some of the coin and bills that had been taken from the safe.

These were duly exhibited, and proven beyond a doubt by the testimony of Aaron Flockman.

"Call Jack Martin," I ordered, and the sheriff soon appeared with a strange-looking, heavily-bearded man, who was placed upon the witness-stand and sworn.

A cursory glance at Detective Weston showed me that he had paled and was eying the witness with a glance of fierce power, but instantly he resumed his usual expression and appeared unconcerned.

"Mr. Martin," I asked, "will you state your

acquaintance with the prisoner at the bar, and relate what you know concerning this case?"

"I became acquainted with the prisoner, Anson Rosser, some four weeks ago, just following the burglary. I heard him tell, in the presence of several persons, how he had assisted in the robbery of Aaron Flockman's safe, and saw him have the money that was here shown, which he received as his share of the spoils."

"Do you know any other persons who were present at the same time?"

"Mr. Detective Weston was present."

"A lie!" shouted Weston, springing to his feet.

"Officer, do your duty," commanded the witness, and a deputy laid his hand on Weston's shoulder, and produced a warrant for his body. In a twinkling the irons were clasped over his wrists, and, livid with rage, he glared at the witness, who coolly proceeded to remove wig and whiskers, and Detective John Homer stood before the astonished multitude!

Then, turning to the jury, Homer continued:

"Johnson Caid and Sandy Murphy were there; Mr. Officer, arrest them at once."

The two astonished jurymen were at once taken in charge, without a show of resistance.

Of course these high-handed measures met with loud protestations from the defendant's counsel, but when Detective Homer explained to the court how he had insinuated himself into the band of burglars and learned their secrets, the judge remanded the entire lot to jail.

Detective Weston, fairly detected and outwitted by his shrewd compeer, pleaded guilty to the burglary, as did also his associates, and in due time all were sentenced to a term in the penitentiary.

Their poor tool, Anson Rosser, received a lighter sentence. The spoils that remained—something over nine thousand dollars—were duly returned to the delighted Jew, who, in a sudden spasm of generosity, rewarded Homer with a handsome fee.

Some of the band of burglars effected their escape before they could be spotted, and among them were several well-known young criminals.

in his vitals, answered to the call of his master, and they rode on side by side.

"Listen, Ruy," cried the cavalier, "I feel my horse stagger beneath me, and I know that he is sped. I shall be taken or killed, but you may do the work for which I am sent. Don Hernando de Soto sends by my hand, to Pedro Diaz at Espiritu Santo, this belt of silver. It is a token to him that he must march at once, to join the Adelantado in the country of Vitachuco. Without his help it may go hard with the governor and his gallant men. You must take the token, and ride for your life."

"I may not leave you, Don Garcia."

"Boy!" cried the cavalier, sternly, "would you peril the lives of two thousand gallant men for the poor satisfaction of dying by my side? I command you to take the belt and flee, while there is yet time."

"My noble master—"

"Silence; take the belt, and make all speed. Say to Don Pedro that the Adelantado commands him, by this token, to break up his camp and join him. The Silver Belt is on its way, and must not stop because my life is sped."

Still the lad hesitated, and a look of love and devotion passed over his face.

"I am strongly tempted to tell you all, Don Garcia, and then you would not order me to leave you. Look closely at my face, and tell me if you ever saw it, before you took me for your page at Havana!"

Don Garcia turned to gaze at him, when his horse staggered, and fell dead without a struggle, pinioning his left leg and foot beneath the fallen body. Then he knew that all was over, and that the page could do nothing more than die above him, for his slight strength would never have sufficed to lift the heavy body of the horse. At the same moment, with defiant whoops, the forms of the Seminoles could be seen darting from the thicket, waving their spears, bows and wooden swords in the air.

"Give me the token, Don Garcia," cried the page. "You will be taken, but I swear to you, when I have done my work, to return and die with you."

"Fare thee well," replied Don Garcia, as he held up the Silver Belt. "Give no thought to me, but save the brave De Soto and his gallant men."

The Indians were now close at hand, shouting wildly, and eager to effect the capture of

one of the great swamp-islands with which the Everglades abound. A rude collection of huts, perhaps two hundred in number, built up with a plaza in the center, after the manner of the Florida Indians. A rude stockade surrounded the village, and out of the gateways poured a motley crowd, men, women and children, wild with joy at the capture of one of the hated race; for it was not often that a Spaniard fell alive into their hands. He was led to the center of the village, and exposed to the insults of the women and children, while the chiefs met in council. They did not remain long, when they came out, headed by the chief who had been a slave, and who had a knowledge of Spanish.

"Spaniard," he said, with a look of mock sorrow on his face, "you have said that the Indians are poor in tortures. This is true, and we have tried to think of something worthy of you, something which even a Spaniard might approve. We have done our best, and no one could do more."

"I am waiting; say your say as quickly as you can."

"We shall leave you at the stake until the sun goes down, without your armor. We will let the women and children shoot arrows into your flesh, and touch you with burning firebrands. These are simple things to do, but our women and children must have some pleasure. As the sun goes down, we will put on your mail, and build a fire about you. We shall then see how stout-hearted you are."

Garcia started, for he knew that the fierce-hearted savage had hit upon a torture which was terrible. But he manned his dauntless heart, and through that long afternoon smiled at the tortures of the women and children, as they shot arrows into his naked breast, and scored his limbs with firebrands. As the sun went slowly down among the branches of the live-oaks, they again inclosed his limbs in the chain-mail which he had worn beneath his garments, and led him to the stake. A great pile of faggots had been heaped up about it, and the chief advanced to light the funeral pile.

"Come nearer," said the captive. "Before you light the faggots, I have a word to say to you."

The chief came nearer, when, with a wild laugh, Garcia burst the bonds upon his hands, and dealt the ruffian a crashing blow with his mailed hand. Had the head of the chief been incased in a helmet of proof, it could scarcely have resisted that terrible blow. As it was, he went down at the feet of his enemy, his skull crushed like an egg-shell.

"This blow for the honor of old Spain!" he cried. "Heaven hounds a Spanish cavalier slays, even in death."

A howl of mingled rage and fury burst from the assembled crowd, as they saw their chief lie dead. A warrior sprang forward, and seizing the torch which had fallen from the hand of the slain man, lighted the pile, and the flame began to creep up, inch by inch, about the mailed limbs of the prisoner. They had chosen wood which would burn with a clear, bright flame, without smoke. At first, the chain-mail was a protection; but, as the heat was communicated to the steel, the torture began in real earnest. The flames could not touch his body, but the heated steel would roast him alive! Still the flames swelled up, and the savages danced exultantly about him, when an event occurred which they had not dreamed of. The green withies began to crackle, and with the exertion of his utmost strength, the prisoner broke away, and flung himself upon the nearest warrior, wrenching from his hand his own sword, of which the fellow had taken possession. The Indian went down, cloven to the teeth, and setting his back to the wall of a cabin, Don Garcia cleared a space about him with his good blade. But they poured upon him like a flood; axes, war-clubs and spears were tried upon his armor; yet he stood, his sword swaying from side to side, his dark eyes flashing, and his resounding voice ringing out his battle-cry:

"Santiago! A Darolles!"

But numbers must win at last, and the strongest arm cannot strike forever. At his feet lay six men, slain by his deadly point, and as many more had slunk away, desperately wounded. He struck full at the exposed head of an Indian, but a club was interposed, and the faithful steel shivered to the hilt. He saw that all was over, and flung himself into the midst, striking with his gauntleted hands. But a dozen hatchets were ringing on his steel cap, and already a spear-point had found a joint in his armor. He sunk upon one knee, still fighting, when high and wild above the din rose the cheering cheer of the cavaliers, and a hundred horsemen suddenly dashed in through the open gates. At their head, holding the pennon of Darolles in his hand, rode Ruy Valdez, the page. And about his waist gleamed the silver belt, which had been sent as a token to Don Pedro Diaz.

It was not a battle, but a massacre. And when the tiger strife was over, two hundred warriors lay dead within the village, and Garcia Darolles awoke from his swoon to find a soft hand laying his brow, while the sweet eyes of the page were looking into his.

"Adela!" he cried.

"Yes, my Garcia. The page, Ruy Valdez, who has ridden by your side in days of peril, is your promised bride. I am worthy now of your great name, for I have saved your life."

Adela del Zani returned to Havana on board the first caravan, which left Espiritu Santo, while her lover turned his horse's head to the north, and joined De Soto in the country of Vitachuco. He fought by his side through many battles, and was one of the few, of all that great company, who reached home again. The girl page had been faithful, and they were wedded. And about the slender waist of the bride, as she stood at the altar, gleamed the silver belt, which was ever preserved in the family of Darolles, as a remembrance of the day when the page led the horsemen of Diaz to the rescue of Don Garcia.

HOW OTHERS SEE US.

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Ruy snatched the belt from the extended hand of his master, stooping in his saddle to reach it.

The Silver Belt.

BY C. D. CLARK.

THE clash of arms, and the thrilling yells of savage warriors, sounded through the depths of the Everglades, and two horsemen dashed out of a little opening at full speed, riding for life or death. At a single glance it was plain that they were Spaniards, for the dress of the leader was that of the Spanish cavalier, with slashed pourpoint over chain mail, high horseman's boots and plumed cap, while the lighter figure was clothed in the simple attire of a page. The cavalier was a handsome young gentleman, with the pale olive complexion of the Navarrese, drooping mustache, and long curling hair, dropping on his shoulders.

The page, who sat his horse easily and gracefully, was a slender stripling, with a face which was strangely fair for a boy. He was wholly unarmed, and his golden hair dropped in rippling waves upon his embroidered coat.

"Give me a weapon, Don Garcia," he cried. "Your dagger, if nothing more."

"Nay, Ruy," replied the cavalier. "If I cannot buckle your breast from harm, your weak hand may not do it. The path is open in front as yet; ride thou on, and leave me to deal with these heathen dogs."

"Leave you, while I have strength to lift a hand in your defense? Never, Don Garcia Darolles; never!"

"Thou art a brave lad," said the Spaniard, "and I am proud to have such a follower. But you can serve me better by flight, for I have no weapon to give you."

"I will not leave you," replied the page, proudly, but firmly.

Still they kept up their mad career, and still about them arose the wild yells of the Seminoles, as they closed in upon the doomed pair. One warrior, braver or more agile than his comrades, sprung out of the thicket in the path, swinging above his head a huge war-club. Don Garcia, shouting his battle-cry, rode at him sword in hand. The blow fell, but was turned aside by the skillful hand of the Spaniard, and his blade was buried to the hilt in the broad bosom of the Seminole. He dropped under the trampling feet of the war-horse, but, even in the agonies of death, he still knew how to sting. Starting upon one knee, he drew the knife at his girdle, and buried it to the hilt just between the fore-legs of the gallant steed, which, maddened by the pain, crushed down the bold savage, and trampled him out of the semblance of humanity beneath his iron hoofs.

"On, on," cried Don Garcia, setting in his spurs. "A few miles more, and we reach Espiritu Santo."

The brave steed, with the knife still buried

the page, for they could see that the cavalier could not escape.

"If you escape, Ruy, and ever reach Havana, say to Dona Adela Zani that her cavalier died as he had lived, a true son of Spain. Away; why do you linger here?"

Ruy snatched the belt from the extended hand of his master, stooping in his saddle to reach it. Their eyes met, and a look of wonder and fear could be seen in the dark eyes of Garcia.

"Ha," he cried, "I know thee now. Ride; ride for your life, for the Indians are upon you."

"You see that I cannot leave you, Garcia."

"You say that you love me and are willing to die for my sake. I command you then, by that love, to do a greater thing than this; to fly, and leave me to my fate."

"I go," the page said. "Woe to you, heathen dogs, when I return."

He shook his clenched hand at the savages, now so near at hand that bows were bent, and the arrows began to whistle about his slight form. Bending low in the saddle, and giving his horse the spurs, he bounded away, and was quickly lost to sight in the depths of the Everglades. While some still pursued him on foot, others rushed upon the prostrate cavalier, made him captive, and raised the body of the horse.

"Ha, robber and murderer," cried the chief, a stalwart giant, naked to the waist, and bearing upon his brown breast the scars of many battles. "In the country of Mudero we will give you enough. We will kill you man by man, and hang you up for the buzzards to peck at."

The man spoke the Spanish tongue quite easily, much to the surprise of the prisoner.

"You look strangely at me, because I can speak your tongue, Spaniard. Look at me; I am a man who has been a slave, when the first Spaniard came to this side of the great sea. For years I toiled in your fields, under the lash. I escaped; I came to these shores, swearing deadly vengeance against all your race."

"Why waste words?" said the Spaniard, coldly. "If I am to die, it is well. A Spanish Hidalgo knows how to meet any fate like a man."

"There will be weeping in the camp of the Spaniard, when the boy rides back and carries the Silver Belt to them. Then they will know that the young chief, who kept the causeway so well, in the country of the chief Mudero, is dying under the tortures of his men."

"Enough of words," replied the Spaniard. "Slave that you are, the best tortures you can think of cannot make me blench."

The Indian smiled grimly, and, at a sign from the speaker, the prisoner was led away, after the dead horse had been stripped of his trappings. They plunged at once into the dismal recesses of the Everglades, the prisoner marching with a firm, free step, giving the Indians glances of haughty defiance, in answer to their fierce looks. A two hours' march brought them to the Indian village, built upon